7

WAVE, LISTEN TO ME!

HIROAKI SAMURA

HIROAKI

7

SAMURA

LISTEN TO ME!

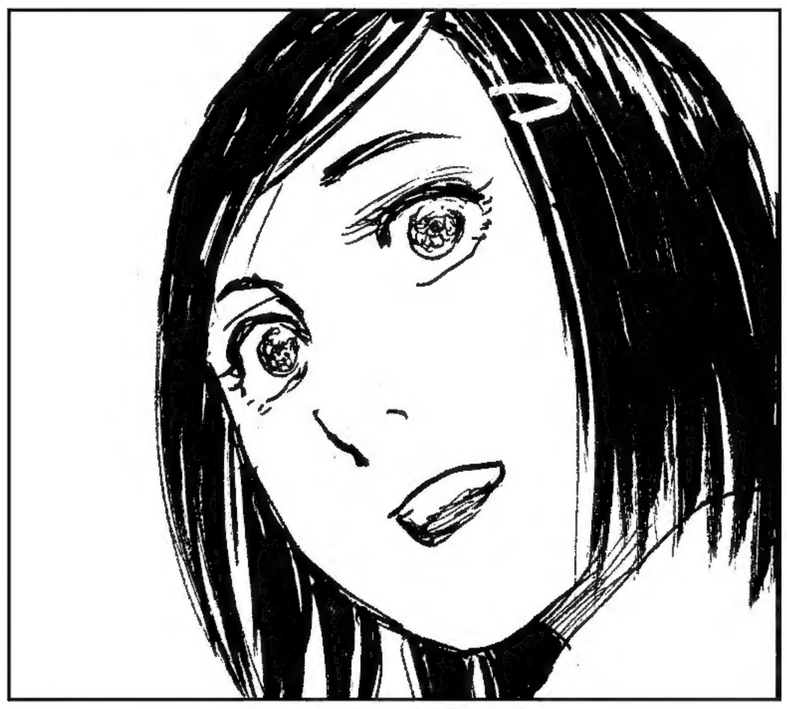
S T O R Y & C A S T

Sapporo, Hokkaido. One night at a bar, Minare Koda has her drunken ramblings secretly recorded by a local FM radio station director, Mato, who plays the audio over the air the following day. The bit's a hit, one thing leads to another, and Minare ends up with her very own radio show. And now, she's been drafted to take part in a major multi-station event by the name of Valentine Radio. Meanwhile, Minare's curry shop coworker, Makie, is secretly training to become a scriptwriter. Then one night, in a fit of pent-up passion, she finally pounces on her roommate, Nakahara…

Minare Koda

The protagonist. Kushiro-born Sapporo resident. Currently 27 and single. Her day job is working as a waitress at the soup curry restaurant VOYAGER, but with her termination perpetually over the horizon, she's scrambling to make a living as a radio DJ.

Wave, Listen to me.



Mizuho Nanba

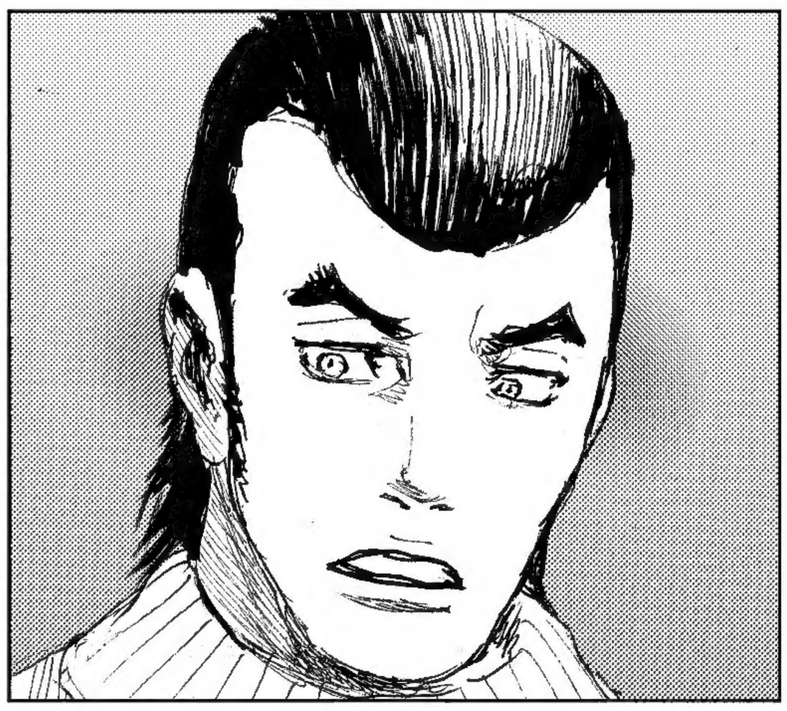
Assistant director at MRS. Currently letting Minare stay with her after she was kicked out of her apartment. Wife material.

Kanetsugu Mato

Director of FM station "Moiwayama Radio" (MRS). Saw potential in Minare's conversation skills and scouted her for the radio business.

Katsumi Kureko

A veteran scriptwriter for MRS and an established erotic novelist. He and Mato go way back.

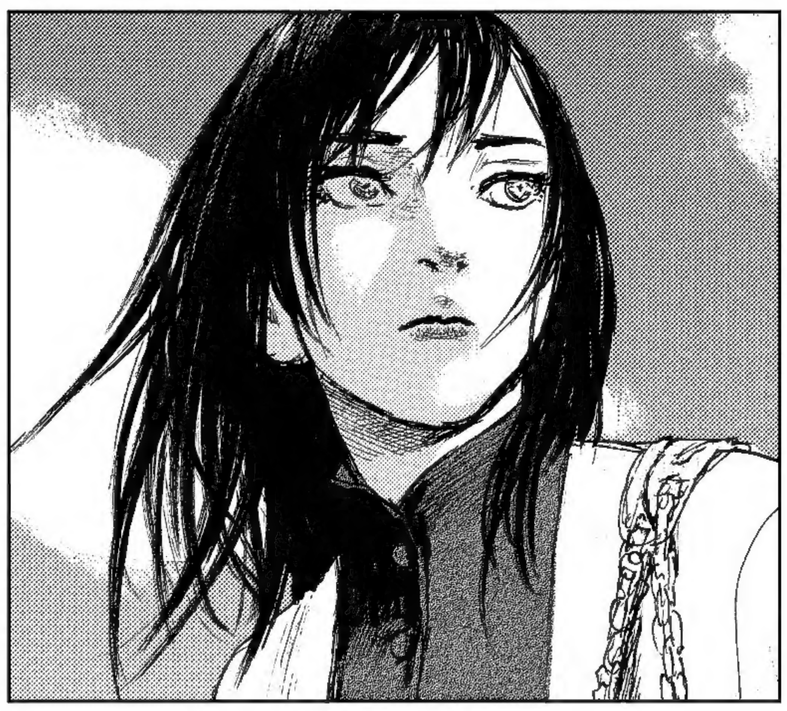


Chuuya Nakahara

An employee at VOYAGER. Supposedly in love with Minare, but invited Makie to stay at his place.

Madoka Chishiro

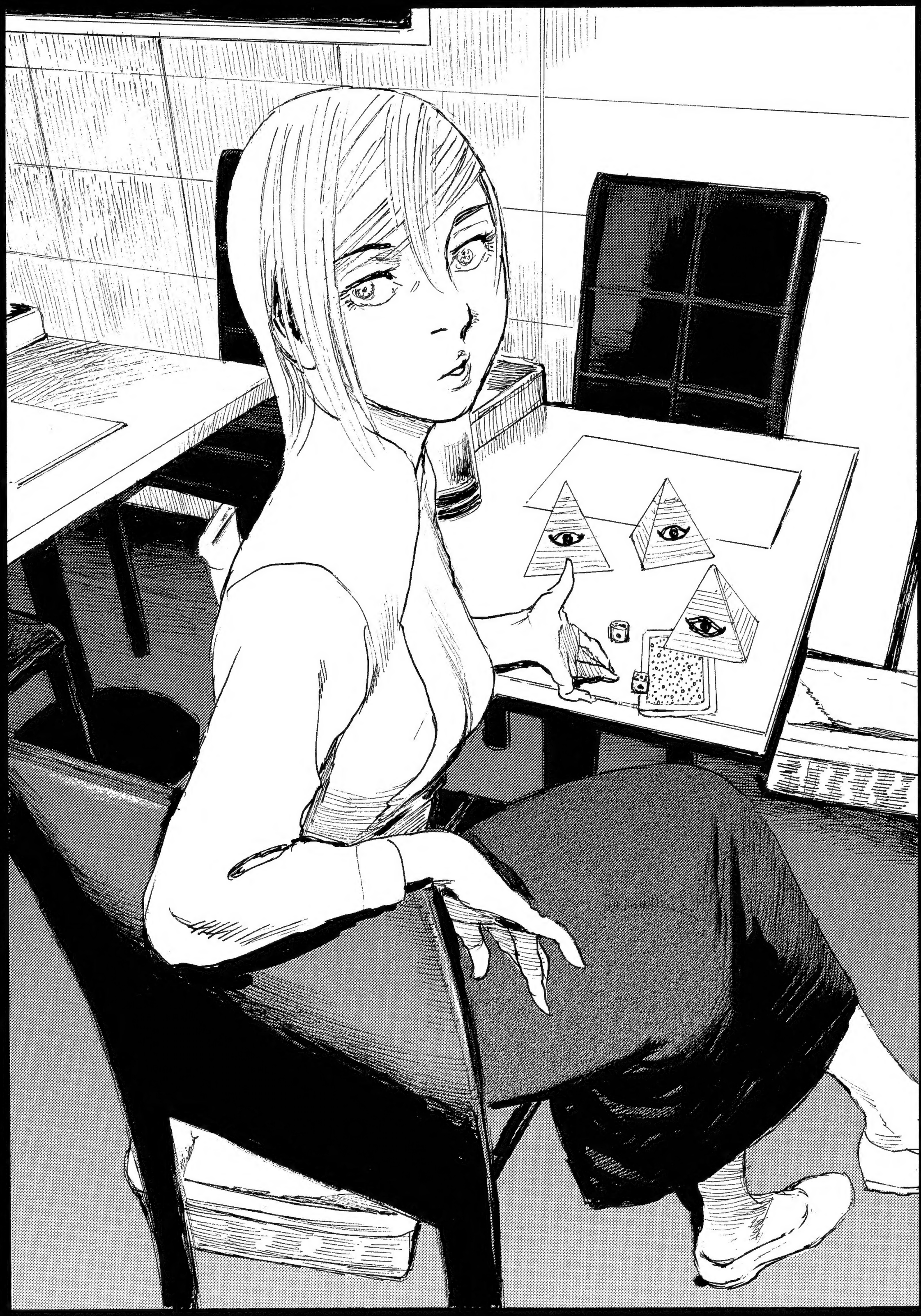
DJ at MRS. A highly skilled talker and close "friend" of Kureko's. Excels at provocative dialogue.



Makie Tachibana

A beautiful woman working at VOYAGER to help pay for the car accident caused by her brother. Not the most skilled swordsman in the manga, nor has she ever killed a stray dog.

Chapter 49 「YOU'RE THE ONLY SCREWUP HERE.」 005
Chapter 50 「I CAN'T BE BOTHERED.」 027
Chapter 51 「WHO CARES AS LONG AS I WIN.」 049
Chapter 52 「I TRUST NO ONE.」 071
Chapter 53 「I WANT TO USE WHATEVER I CAN.」 093
Chapter 54 「BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY.」 113
Chapter 55 「INCONCEIVABLE.」 135
Chapter 56 「I CAN'T EVEN SEE YOUR FACE.」 155



Chapter 49 「 YOU'RE THE ONLY SCREWUP HERE. 」

WHA?!

WHEW. THANK GOD.

IT WAS JUST A DREAM...

...WAIT.

...

...MY CEILING.

THAT AIN'T...

AGH!

STOMP

WHOA! THE HELL?!

...OH, RIGHT. MY BAD!

OW, OW, OW, OW!

IT'S COOL.

I TOTALLY FORGOT YOU WERE OVER.

SORRY ABOUT THAT.

BUT THEY'RE ALL EITHER LIVING WITH THEIR GIRLFRIENDS OR OUT OF TOWN.

BELIEVE ME, I TRIED PHONING ALL MY FRIENDS IN SAPPORO BEFORE YOU,

I KNOW WE SAW SOME SHIT TOGETHER IN WASSAMU, BUT THAT'S KIND OF THE ONLY WAY WE KNOW EACH OTHER.

WHY'D YOU CALL *ME* UP, ANYWAY?

I LEFT HER A NOTE.

DON'T YOU THINK SHE'S GONNA FREAK OUT WHEN SHE WAKES UP AND YOUR ASS IS LONG GONE?

TACHI-BANA-SAN, WAS IT?

I'M NOT SURE I'D MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT.

TOO RISKY.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR BOSS?

...

KONK

sff

haa

UHH... TACHIBANA-SAN?

I'VE HEARD SNORING CAN PUT YOU AT RISK FOR A STROKE, BUT...

WELL, SHE'S STILL BREATH-ING.

WAY TO GO, CHUUYA!

BUT I STAYED STRONG.

MAN, WE WERE **THIS** CLOSE TO MAKING THIS SCENE R-RATED.

WHY THE HELL *WOULDN'T* YOU SLEEP WITH HER?

I DON'T KNOW *WHY*, BUT WHAT-EVER.

YEAH, I KNOW YOU HAVE A THING FOR KODA-SAN.

KOMOTO-SAN, I THINK I MENTIONED THIS ON THE WAY TO WASSAMU, BUT...

WHAT ARE YOU, SOME '80S ERA MANGA PRO-TAGONIST?

what do you mean "way to go"?

YOU'RE TOTALLY RIGHT.

SHIT, I CAN'T DENY THAT.

IN THAT CASE, WHY ARE YOU LETTING HER STAY WITH YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE?

"NICE" GUYS LIKE YOU WHO OFFER TO HELP WITHOUT THINKING THINGS THROUGH ALWAYS END UP SCREWING THEM-SELVES OVER.

YEAH, KEEP TALKING.

SHE'S BEEN SO GAGA FOR KODA-SAN LATELY THAT SHE KEEPS GIVING ME THE COLD SHOULDER.

SPEAKING OF NANBA,

AS YOUR ELDER, I'D LOVE TO LECTURE YOU SOME MORE,

BUT I'M NOT EXACTLY A WOMAN EXPERT, EITHER.

WATCHING YOU AND NANBA-SAN GO BACK AND FORTH, I KINDA GUESSED THAT.

WHENEVER MINARE-SAN DOUBLE-BOOKS WITH ME AND NANBA-SAN, SHE BLOWS ME OFF EVERY SINGLE TIME! FOR STARTERS, I WANNA KNOW HOW THIS SHIT KEEPS HAPPENING!

BACK AT YOU, MAN!

THIS WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED IF *YOU'D* GOTTEN YOUR ACT TOGETHER...

Q. I'VE HEARD THAT MEN OFTEN BECOME CLOSE FRIENDS AFTER A FIGHT. IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THAT?

A. NOT ALWAYS. THIS IS LESS A FIGHT AND MORE AN INSTANCE OF TWO SCREWUPS TRYING TO PIN THE BLAME ON EACH OTHER TO PROTECT THEIR EGOS.

YOU'VE BEEN WORKING YOURSELF TOO HARD LATELY, GIRL.

STAY HOME AND GET SOME REST.

DON'T WORRY, WE CAN HANDLE THINGS HERE.

WHAT? A COLD?

OH, DEAR.

TACHI-BANA-SAN CALLED IN SICK?

FOR REAL?

MM-HM. ALL RIGHT. TAKE CARE.

AND BY THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE, I'M GUESS-ING THIS IS NEWS TO YOU TOO.

WELL, YEAH. AREN'T YOU?

WORRIED, NAKAHARA-KUN?

what's with the junk?

LET'S SEE WHAT TACHIBANA-SAN'S UP TO RIGHT NOW...

HERE, WHY DON'T I BESEECH THE STARS FOR YOU?

UMM. ACTUALLY, MINARE-SAN...

WHAT'S SHE SO GIDDY ABOUT?

I COULD'VE SWORN YOU TWO LIVED TOGETHER. *DO HO HO HO HO!*

NOW WHY WOULD THAT BE?

NO WAY! FINAL-LY?!

YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE SAYING THAT WHEN YOU KNOW EXACTLY HOW I FEEL...

WAIT, ARE YOU STUPID?

WHY THE HELL *WOULDN'T* YOU SLEEP WITH HER?!

TELL ME SOME-THIN', NAKA-HARA-KUN.

WELL, EVEN IF YOU DID, MY FEELINGS WOULDN'T CHANGE.

UGH, YOU'RE *STILL* STUCK ON THAT?

AND HERE I'VE BEEN SO INFATUATED WITH MIZUHO LATELY THAT I FEEL LIKE I MIGHT GROW AN ADAM'S APPLE ANY DAY NOW.

DON'T GET ME WRONG, I WAS PRETTY WARY OF HER AT FIRST, TOO.

Get back to work, you two...

WHAT'S *MY BEEF?*

UHH... I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING.

WHAT EXACTLY IS YOUR BEEF WITH TACHIBANA-SAN?

I'LL ADMIT, SHE HAD ME WORRIED FOR A WHILE.

I THOUGHT SHE WAS TRYING TO DETHRONE MY ASS.

BUT THEN I GAVE IT SOME THOUGHT...

YOU MAKE IT SOUND SO DEVI-OUS...

THEN, WHILE I WAS BUSY GETTING MY SHOW TOGETHER, SHE COMES UP WITH ALL THESE NEW DISHES TO TRY TO CURRY FAVOR WITH THE BOSS. PUN INTENDED.

AND IMMEDIATELY BECOMES A SUPERSTAR AROUND THE RESTAURANT.

SHE JUST SHOWS UP ONE DAY OUT OF THE BLUE,

THEN WHO BETTER THAN HER TO FILL IT, Y'KNOW?

...AND REALIZED RIGHT NOW, MY PLACE IS ON THE RADIO FRONT.

IF MY ABSENCE WERE TO LEAVE A VOID HERE AT VOYAGER,

SHE LOVES YOU WITH EVERY FIBER OF HER BEING.

DESPITE KNOWING FULL WELL YOU'RE SMITTEN WITH ME,

THE SAME GOES FOR YOU.

THIS IS A SIGN FROM ABOVE!

DON'T YOU SEE?

Cancel
New Message
98%
Send
To: Nakahara-san
Subject:
Sent from my iPhone
1
2 ABC
3 DEF
4 GHI
5 JKL
6
I'M SCARED...

IF ONLY I COULD'VE WOKEN UP...

...WITHOUT ANY RECOLLECTION OF LAST NIGHT.

MY MEMORY'S AT LEAST 80% INTACT. UUUGH.

AT THIS POINT,

I GUESS MY ONLY OPTION IS TO TAKE THE MONEY AND MOVE OUT...

HM...? WHAT'S THIS?

I'LL JUST KEEP IT IN MY PURSE FOR NOW.

NAH, SHE'S GONE. I CAN TALK.

HELLO?

OH, HEY. DID YOU GET HOME ALL RIGHT? GOOD.

プルルルルルルルルル…

TRRRR

I'M SO SORRY.

IT SEEMS I HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO DRINK LAST NIGHT.

WHEN I WOKE UP, I STILL COULDN'T RECALL JUST HOW I ENDED UP AT YOUR HOUSE...

I WANTED TO APOLOGIZE FOR BEING SO...BRASH.

...BUT IT JUST CAME BACK TO ME.

NO...

THAT RIGHT?

ALRIGHTY. FIRST STOP, SHIROISHI-KU.

OH, RIGHT. YOU'RE ROOMING WITH YOUR COWORKER, HUH?

UM...

CAN YOU GIVE DIREC-TIONS?

THAT'S WHERE MY BROTH-ER'S HOUSE IS...

ANYWHERE BUT THERE.

...SURE. I'VE GOT TOMORROW OFF, ANYWAY.

JIRO-SAN, WOULD IT BE ALL RIGHT IF I STAY AT YOUR HOUSE TONIGHT?

UH... WHAT?

JIRO-SAN,

I NEED TO FIND A JOB AND SUPPORT MYSELF AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

BAM

PLEASE LOOK OVER MY SCRIPT!

THE THING IS,

THERE ISN'T A WHOLE LOT OF WORK FOR WRITERS IN THE RADIO INDUSTRY, SO I NEED TO GET MY SKILLS UP TO TV LEVEL, QUICK.

AT FIRST, I ONLY STARTED WRITING AS A HOBBY,

BUT NOW... I'D LIKE TO MAKE A LIVING OFF OF IT IF I CAN.

WHERE'S YOUR AMBITION, JIRO-SAN?!

YOU DON'T PULL PUNCHES WHEN YOU'RE DRUNK, HUH?

THAT APATHY IS THE REASON YOUR DUO CAN'T GET A REGULAR SPOT ON TV IN TOKYO, YOU KNOW!

OH, BY THE WAY,

WHOA, SLOW DOWN. WE'RE NOT EVEN CONFIRMED FOR THAT YET.

THIS IS FOR THE VALENTINE RADIO SPECIAL IN FEBRUARY.

AH, IT'S COOL. I HAD FUN LAST NIGHT.

UH-HUH... SURE, THAT WORKS. SEE YOU SUNDAY. CIAO.

YEAH, REALLY.

I'M SO, SO, SO, SOOO SORRY!

NOT ONLY WAS I INCREDIBLY RUDE AND AUDACIOUS,

BUT I EVEN GAVE YOUR GIRLFRIEND THE WRONG IDEA...

PHEW...

MAYBE I SHOULD GO TO WORK AFTER ALL. UGH, *THAT'LL* BE AWKWARD.

NO...

SINCE I HAVE THE DAY OFF, I'D BETTER USE IT TO FIND A NEW PLACE TO LIVE.

I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE I'M DOING THIS PURELY OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF MY HEART, Y'KNOW.

HONESTLY, THAT STILL DOESN'T SOUND LIKE A BAD LIFE AT ALL.

IF I WERE STILL THE SAME AS WHEN I FIRST CAME TO VOYAGER,

I WOULD'VE BEEN PLENTY CONTENT WORKING THERE WITH NAKAHARA-SAN FOREVER.

BUT... I'VE GOTTEN SPOILED.

I WANT TO SEE WHAT I'M CAPABLE OF.

I WASN'T SURE IF WE'D BE ABLE TO FIND PARKING, SINCE IT'S A HOUSE AND ALL.

THAT WAS QUICK. WE COULD'VE TAKEN MY CAR, Y'KNOW.

BET THEY HAD SOME REAL *RIVETING* CONVERSATION GOING. LIKE HOW THE INDEPENDENT PARTY'S LOOKIN' IN THE NEXT ELECTION.

NAKAHARA-SAN SPENT THE NIGHT AT KOMOTO-SAN'S?! WOW...

CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW FUNKY THAT ROOM HAD TO SMELL?

HUH ?!

I DON'T THINK I AM...

APPARENTLY, KOMOTO-SAN WAS WHINING ABOUT HOW YOU'VE BEEN SNUBBING HIM EVEN MORE THAN BEFORE THE WHOLE WASSAMU DEBACLE.

OH, AND I WASN'T SURE IF I SHOULD TELL YOU THIS, BUT...

THAT'S NOT... WAIT, WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

HONESTLY, I JUST THINK KOMOTO-SAN'S TOO GOOD FOR ME.

I.E., SHE'S NOT INTO YOU, BRO.

I GUESS ONLY A DRIED-UP OLD PRUNE OF A MAN WILL GET YOU DROOLING, HUH?

I DUNNO.

I GUESS I JUST DON'T WANT TO BE TREATED LIKE A PORCELAIN DOLL.

BUT I...

HE'D PROBABLY TRY TO PROTECT ME IN ANY WAY HE COULD.

I'M SURE KOMOTO-SAN WOULD BE VERY SWEET AND THOUGHTFUL IF WE WENT OUT.

WOW. EVEN I LONG FOR THE WARM, SAFE EMBRACE OF A HUNK LIKE KAKURYU FROM TIME TO TIME...

MIZUHO...

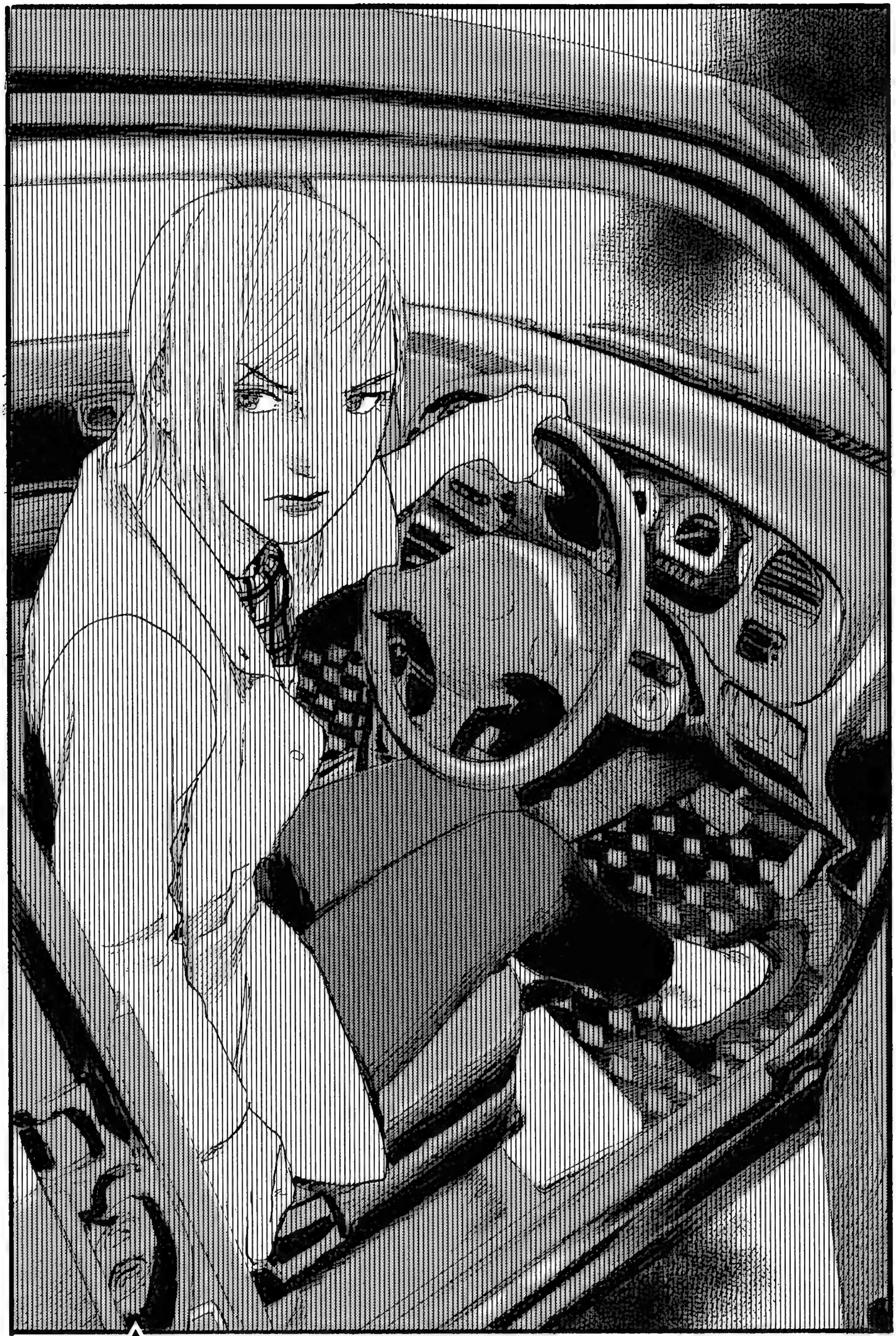
ピンポーン

…Yes?

GOOD AFTERNOON. WE'RE FROM MOIWAYAMA RADIO.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING.

PLEASE, COME RIGHT IN.



Chapter 50 「I CAN'T BE BOTHERED.」

HUH?!

SO SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.

HM? OH, PARDON ME.

UH... YEAH.

PLEASE, COME IN.

ISN'T NOVEMBER JUST DREAD-FUL? ALL THE COLD WITHOUT ANY OF THE SNOW.

!

HUH? WHO?

IS SHE YOUR DAUGHTER?

THE WOMAN DOWN THE HALL.

WHERE? I DON'T SEE ANYONE...

AWW. YOU'RE NO FUN.

SERIOUSLY, MA'AM. I'M TRYING MY DARNDEST TO EXORCISE ALL THE SUPERNATURAL BS FROM MY SHOW, SO IF YOU COULD JUST KEEP THOSE JOKES TO YOURSELF, THAT'D BE SWELL.

MOM! WOULD YOU CUT THAT OUT? THIS ISN'T A GAME!

AUDIO?

...

WE'LL GO OVER THE AUDIO AFTER-WARD SO YOU CAN LET US KNOW IF THERE ARE ANY PARTS YOU WANT EDITED OUT.

ONO-SAN, DO YOU MIND IF WE START RE-CORDING NOW?

1. MINARE KODA WILL MAKE MULTIPLE ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCE ONO-SAN'S SON TO COME OUT OF HIS ROOM.

2. INTERVIEWS WITH THE FAMILY.

3. WITH THE FAMILY'S CONSENT, THE PROCESS AND CONVER-SATIONS THEREIN WILL BE BROADCAST OVER THE AIR IN FULL, REGARDLESS IF THE INTERVENTION IS SUCCESSFUL OR NOT.

UM... WHY DON'T I JUST GO OVER THE SHOW PLAN AGAIN?

WHAT'S WITH THIS LADY?

WHAT? YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY THIS ON THE RADIO?

THAT'S NEWS TO ME.

THAT'S THE IDEA...

OH, SORRY. MY NAME IS ERIKO ONO.

UM...

EXCUSE ME. MAY I HAVE A WORD?

THE TRUTH IS, *I'M* BOHEMIAN BESHOW.

I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY, MINARE-SAN.

WHAT'S HER STANCE ON YOUR BROTHER?

...

GOOD QUES-TION.

I'M NOT SURE, REALLY. FOR APPEAR-ANCES' SAKE, MAYBE?

AND I GUESS... I JUST WISHED SHE'D DO *SOMETHING* TO SOLVE THIS MESS.

AHH. FIGURES.

WHY DID YOU WRITE IN AS YOUR MOTHER?

SHE'S GIVEN UP ON HIM.

I THINK SHE JUST DOESN'T CARE...

...SINCE HE ISN'T BLOOD-RELATED TO US.

KNOCK KNOCK

TWO GIRLS FROM YOUR HIGH SCHOOL ARE HERE TO SEE YOU.

JUNICHI?

...

GIRLS...? WHO?

TAKA-SHIMA-SAN AND MINO-SAN.

AND THEN...

OH, GOSH. IT'S LIKE I'M WATCHING A COP DRAMA...

UGH. SURE *SMELLS* LIKE A MAN CAVE.

YEAH, YEAH. 'SCUSE US FOR BARGING IN.

WHOA! WHAT THE—

WAIT... WHO'RE YOU?

Recorder

GUESS IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY: SALTY SHUT-INS NEVER FORGET THEIR CUTE CLASSMATES' NAMES...

TAKA-SHIMA-SAN AND MINO-SAN, EH?

YEARBOOK

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU PEOPLE?!

THE FACT THAT HE TOOK THE BAIT SO EASILY JUST GOES TO SHOW THERE'S STILL HOPE FOR HIM.

THIS PAGE POSSIBLY CONTAINS ORIGINAL RESEARCH.

MOM!

ALRIGHTY. CAN I LEAVE THE REST TO YOU, THEN?

I HAVE TO GET DINNER READY.

DON'T FLATTER YOURSELF, BUCKO.

SHIT, MAN. WHO AM I, AMA-TERASU?

C'MON, BROTHER DEAREST. WHAT SAY WE HAVE A LI'L CHAT?

BACK OFF, BITCH!

FUGH!
AGH!
SEE, MIZUHO? DUDE'S A TOTAL WIMP.
SO MUCH FOR VIOLENCE BEING THE LAST RESORT...
GET THE FUCK OUT!
OOP.
WHOMP
WHOMP
HOOWAH
LISTEN UP. IF YOU THINK WE'RE AS SOFT AS YOUR STEPSISTER OR THE FOLKS AT THE SHUT-IN COUNSELING CENTER,
YOU'RE DEALING WITH YAKUZA-LEVEL MUSCLE HERE.
THEN YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER THING COMING.
WAS IT?
JUNICHI ONO-KUN,

BY FORCE, IF NECESSARY.

VACAY'S OVER, PAL. TIME TO REJOIN SOCIETY.

THE REASON WE'RE HERE TODAY...

...IS BECAUSE YOUR FAMILY'S ASKED US TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO DRAG YOU OUTTA YOUR MUSKY-ASS ROOM.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY WORK CLOTHES, I CAN GIVE YOU A MAKEOVER WITH MY LATE-TWENTIES FASHION SENSE.

UNI● WORK FOR YOU?

AND WE'LL SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO HOOK YOU UP WITH A JOB.

THAT SAID, I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO HEAR YOUR SIDE OF THE STORY.

4

...

3

2

...

1

HEH HEH. I CAN READ YOU LIKE A BOOK, DUDE.

1

"WHAT'S HER PROBLEM? SHE JUST BARGES IN AND STARTS SHIT..."

MINARE-SAN!

YOU *REALLY* HAVE TO STOP PRESSING PEOPLE LIKE THAT!

"THEY CAN FUCK OFF FOR ALL I CARE...BUT I WOULDN'T MIND TUSSLING WITH HER A FEW MORE TIMES BEFORE THEY LEAVE. THE CHICK BEHIND HER TOO IF I CAN..."

4

3

"Y'KNOW, SHE'S ACTUALLY PRETTY BUSTY."

"BUT... GIRLS SURE ARE SOFT, HUH? THEY SMELL NICE TOO."

2

*GILGAMESH NIGHT: A SOFTCORE PORN JAPANESE VARIETY SHOW THAT AIRED BETWEEN 1991-1998.

THIS DOLL...

IT'S HAND-MADE.

HEY! DON'T TOUCH THAT!

DID YOU MAKE THIS, JUNICHI-SAN?

I THINK HE MEANS COMEDIA, THE INDIE COMIC CON.

DIA?

deer burger kushiro?

I WENT ONCE TO HELP MY FRIEND SELL HER THREE KINGDOMS BOOK.

It was Liu Feng x Mang Da.

HUH?! HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?

DID YOU USED TO BE PART OF THAT SCENE?

A DOLL-MAKER I MET AT DIA TAUGHT ME HOW...

I SEE...

...

YOUR *REAL* SISTER.

YOU MODELED IT AFTER YOUR SISTER, DIDN'T YOU?

THE FIVE OF US OFFICIALLY BECAME A FAMILY SEVEN YEARS AGO.

BUT AFTER OUR PARENTS GOT MARRIED, SHE STARTED SPENDING MORE TIME WITH ME THAN HIM. I GET THE FEELING HE STILL HOLDS IT AGAINST ME.

MY STEP-BROTHER'S ALWAYS BEEN WITHDRAWN AND WOULD ONLY REALLY OPEN UP TO HIS FULL SISTER.

THE "GET A JOB" PART MIGHT ACTUALLY GET UNDER JUN-CHAN'S SKIN.

MOM, CAN YOU PLEASE JUST STAY OUT OF THIS?!

I DON'T THINK SOCIAL MEDIA WAS THAT BIG IN 2008...

I CAN ALREADY TASTE THE SWEET TEARS OF ALL THOSE JEALOUS FUCKS CALLING BULLSHIT OR TELLING ME TO STOP POSTING AND GET A JOB.

FOR REAL? MAN, IF I WAS IN HIS SHOES, I'D BRAG ABOUT IT ONLINE LIKE NO ONE'S BUSINESS.

OH, GOD. WHY COULDN'T THEY HAVE JUST TAKEN THE TRAIN?

THAT'S DARK...

IT WAS AN ACCI-DENT.

EVERYTHING CHANGED FIVE YEARS AGO WHEN MY FAMILY WENT ON A TRIP TO TOHOKU.

BUT ON THE WAY THEY...

MY STEP-FATHER AND STEPSISTER DROVE HOME A DAY EARLY TO GET BACK FOR WORK AND CLUB,

WHY DO YOU LOOK SO PROUD OF YOURSELF, MOM? IT'S NOT LIKE ANYTHING YOU EAT GETS TURNED INTO BRAIN FUEL.

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'LL BE AT IT FOR A WHILE, SO WHY DON'T YOU TWO JOIN US FOR DINNER?

THE BRAIN CAN'T RUN ON AN EMPTY STOMACH!

SORRY ABOUT THAT.

SHE USED TO BE A WRECK UNTIL A COUPLE YEARS AGO, NOW SHE'S ALL SUNSHINE AND RAINBOWS.

WELL... LIFE GOES ON FOR THE BEREAVED, AFTER ALL.

GO RUN TO THE STORE!

THE MEAT'LL TASTE FUNKY IF YOU DON'T ADD ANY HERBS!

ARE YOU MAKING HAMBURG STEAKS WITHOUT ROSEMARY AGAIN?!

HEY! DON'T TREAT YOUR MOTHER LIKE A SEA SQUIRT!

GUESS THIS IS JUST PAR FOR THE COURSE...

BUT I CAN'T EVEN GET MY STEP-BROTHER TO TALK TO ME.

I YELL AT MY MOTHER OVER EVERY LITTLE THING,

I'M THE REAL DRAG HERE.

FAIR ENOUGH. I GUESS SHE'S JUST MOVED ON.

YEAH, THERE AIN'T A SOUL IN THE WORLD MIGHTIER THAN MILK.

DON'T BEAT YOUR-SELF UP, ERIKO-SAN...

I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT I'VE BEEN ABOUT AS HELPFUL AS THIS MILK.

THIS IS SHAPING UP TO BE A LOOONG ARC, MIZUHO.

HONESTLY, DOES THIS STUFF EVEN JIVE WITH FM RADIO?

WOULDN'T SOMETHING NICE AND BENIGN LIKE "SCHOOL FESTIVAL MEMORIES" FLY OVER BETTER THIS TIME OF THE YEAR?

TRUE, IT MIGHT BE A BETTER FIT FOR AM RADIO.

PEOPLE PROBLEMS TAKE TIME, MINARE-SAN. YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE THEY ASKED US TO REMOVE A HORNET'S NEST.

AND HERE I THOUGHT WE'D GET THIS SHIT SETTLED BEFORE SUNDOWN!

THE NEW CAST FUCKIN' SUCKS!

THE LAST THING THEY WANT IS TO BE REMINDED OF THEIR OWN FAMILY DRAMA.

NAH. MY LISTENERS TUNE IN FOR ONE THING, AND THAT'S TO HEAR CRAZY SHIT.

HUH. GLARING CONTRADICTION ASIDE, SHE'S MORE SELF-AWARE THAN I THOUGHT.

BUT I THINK *WAVE, LISTEN TO ME* HAS THE BROAD APPEAL TO NAVIGATE THESE SORTS OF ISSUES WELL.

MIND IF WE STOP AT THE BANK? I'M OUTTA CASH.

SURE. I'LL GRAB SOME MILK WHILE YOU DO THAT.

Savings Account

te	Code	Withdrawal	Deposit	Balance
12	Cash	*20,000	Seven ENET	*350,412
		*216	Charge Fee	*350,196
-12	Transfer		*30,000	*380,196
-13	Deposit	Moiwayama Radio		*370,196
-16	Cash	*10,000	Seven ENET	*369,980
		*216	Charge Fee	*360,945
1-16	Transfer	*9,035	Hokkai Electric	*310,945
1-18	Transfer	*50,000	SMBC	*310,837
1-20	Cash	*108	Charge Fee	
11-20	Transfer			

...?

WHICH ALSO MAKES ME WONDER JUST HOW LONG I PLAN ON BUMMING AT YOUR PLACE...

BUT HE SHOULD BE LONG GONE BY NOW.

YOU'RE GOING BACK TO THE APARTMENT?

I WAS LETTING OKI-SAN STAY THERE WHILE HIS PLACE WAS BEING CLEANED,

YEAH, I DUNNO WHAT'S UP, BUT THE ELECTRIC COMPANY TOOK A CHUNK OUTTA MY BANK ACCOUNT.

I'LL GO WITH YOU.

S'OK, I'LL BE BACK IN A JIFFY. YOU GO ON UP AND FEED THE TURTLES.

VRRRR

DDDDRRR

...HUH?

WAIT, WHY'S THE DOOR UN-LOCKED?!

THE LIGHTS ARE ON.

BAM

YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST WALTZ INTO MY PAD AND—

ALL RIGHT, ASS-HOLE!

MINARE-SAN?!

AH...!

...?

Chapter 51 「 WHO CARES AS LONG AS I WIN. 」

MINARE-SAN!

S-S-SORRY TO LET OUR-SELVES IN!

MI-

MOM?

AND HIS ...

HIROMI SAIKI...?

SORRY TO STARTLE YOU, DEAR. YOU MUST BE FLABBER-GASTED.

OH, MY, MY, MY!

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

WOW... IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

YEAH, YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!

THE HELL ARE YOU DOING IN MY APART-MENT?!

NEVER MIND.

I CAN PRETTY MUCH GUESS WHAT YOU'RE UP TO,

BUT HOW'D YOU EVEN GET IN?! WASN'T THE DOOR LOCKED?

TWO WEEKS ?!

WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED TWO WEEKS AGO...

OH! HERE WE ARE.

EXCUSE ME...

ISN'T THIS MINARE KODA-SAN'S APARTMENT?

YES, THAT'S RIGHT.

AND YOU ARE?

OH, UM... KODA-SAN HAS ALLOWED US TO STAY AT HER APARTMENT FOR THE TIME BEING, YOU SEE.

AHH. IS THAT SO?

WOULD YOU LIKE THE KEY, THEN?

BEFORE THE POLICE TOOK HER AWAY,

PALI... I MEAN, HOKAKUSHI-SAN GAVE ME AN ENVELOPE AS A "PARTING GIFT."

FOR STARTERS, HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE I LIVE?!

I DON'T REMEMBER TELLING HIROMI-KUN...

S-SORRY, MINARE-SAN.

BULL-SHIT!

WHY THE HELL DIDN'T HE CALL AND CHECK WITH ME FIRST?!

THAT'S COMMON SENSE, MAN!

NOT THAT I'M ONE TO TALK, BUT COME ON...

*THE CULT CONFISCATED THEIR LICENSES.

...

INSIDE WAS A USB STICK,

AND A PHOTO OF YOU WITH YOUR ADDRESS WRITTEN ON BACK.

EVERYONE RETURNED TO THEIR PREVIOUS HOMES.

AFTER THE POLICE FINISHED QUESTIONING THE FOLLOWERS,

I'D RATHER NOT...

PLEASE CONNECT THE DOTS, KODA-SAN.

UNFORTUNATELY, MY SON AND I HAD NOWHERE TO GO SINCE I'D SOLD OUR HOUSE WHEN WE FIRST JOINED THE SCHOOL.

RGH... GUESS I CAN'T DENY THAT.

AFTER ALL, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE BEEN BACK IN TWO WEEKS!

KODA-SAN, YOU AREN'T STAYING HERE AT THE MOMENT, ARE YOU?!

AHH, FINE. YOU CAN STAY.

BUT I'M GONNA NEED YOU TO CHIP IN FOR RENT AND UTILITIES, AT LEAST.

IF YOU CAN JUST COVER WHAT YOU USE ON TOP OF THE BASE RATE, THAT WORKS FOR ME.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

I can't say no to those puppy dog eyes...

PLEASE, MINARE-SAN!

I PROMISE IT'S JUST UNTIL WE FIND A NEW PLACE TO LIVE!

HUH?

?

BY THE WAY, KODA-SAN. MAY I HAVE A WORD?

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS, WON'T YOU?

IT'S SORT OF A *DELICATE* TOPIC.

BRR... WHY CAN'T WE TALK INSIDE?

THIS IS THE PHOTO MY SON RECEIVED FROM HOKA-KUSHI-SAN.

HM?

WOULD YOU MIND EXPLAINING YOURSELF, PLEASE?

KODA-SAN, YOU *ARE* AWARE HIROMI IS ONLY 16, AREN'T YOU?

WHOA, HOLD UP! IT'S NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, I SWEAR!

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THE USB STICK CONTAINED 50 SIMILAR PHOTOS TAKEN FROM ALL DIFFERENT ANGLES.

YOU'RE CLEARLY USING YOUR SUPERIOR SIZE AND STRENGTH TO FORCE YOURSELF ON MY SON.

BUT JUDGING BY THE PHOTO,

IT WOULD BE ONE THING IF IT WAS CONSENSUAL,

YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO FOOL ME WITH CONSPIRACY THEORIES, KODA-SAN.

WHAT?! OH, PLEASE.

I CAN EXPLAIN!

SEE, THE CULT WAS SECRETLY RESEARCH-ING MIND CONTROL, AND...

HE SAYS HE DOESN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING FROM WHEN THE PHOTO WAS TAKEN.

POOR THING... HE MUST BE IN SHOCK.

UM... WHAT'D HIROMI-KUN HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THIS?

HIROMI BEGGED ME NOT TO MAKE A STINK, AND HOW COULD I SAY NO TO MY LITTLE ANGEL?

DO HO HO HO HO...

I DON'T INTEND TO TAKE YOU TO COURT OVER THIS LITTLE SCANDAL.

BUT REST ASSURED, KODA-SAN.

AH, YES. ABOUT THE RENT AND UTILITIES...

OOP. NOW, WHERE WAS I?

I COULDN'T SAY ANY-THING!

WHAT THE HELL, MAN?

WHAT'D I DO TO DESERVE THIS SHIT?!

THERE, THERE.

SHE'S MAKING ME PAY FOR EVERY-THING!

Do you have any idea what time it is?

I'M SURE HOKAKUSHI-SAN COULD CLEAR THIS UP IN NO TIME,

IF SHE WASN'T BEHIND BARS!

SHE'S STILL ON REMAND.

can I clean your ears while I'm at it?

WHY DIDN'T YOU GET HIROMI-KUN TO EXPLAIN?

I TRIED, BUT IT TURNS OUT HE REALLY DOESN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING.

NO... I GUESS NOT, HUH?

WELL, ASIDE FROM TAKING A HIT ON UTILITIES ...

I MEAN, YOU'VE BEEN PAYING RENT THIS WHOLE TIME,

SO IT'S NOT LIKE ANY-THING'S *REALLY* CHANGED, RIGHT?

MIZUHO...

Is that a halo I see?

THEN WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? JUST STAY HERE FOR-EVER.

AND HOW DO YOU APPROACH THOSE PEOPLE?

HOW? THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE. WELL, I GUESS I MIGHT BE A *LITTLE* SOFTER ON THEM.

SHUT-IN LISTENERS?

SURE, I KNOW PLENTY. EVEN FROM JUST THE ONES WHO'VE WRITTEN IN ABOUT IT.

DUH HUH HUH. HOWDY, CHISHIRO-SEMPAI.

...WHAT? YOU'RE CREEPING ME OUT.

HMM. GOTCHA. MAKES SENSE.

THEY DON'T NEED ME TO TELL THEM HOW BAD THINGS ARE. I JUST DO MY JOB AS A RADIO PERSONALITY.

WE REALLY SHOULD'VE ASKED HER FIRST...

Too Late

LECTURING PEOPLE ABOUT TAKING RESPONSIBILITY AND GETTING THEIR ACT TOGETHER WILL ONLY HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT.

ONE THING YOU *SHOULDN'T* DO IS FOOL YOURSELF INTO THINKING YOU CAN CHANGE THEM.

DO YOU EVER GET EMAILS FROM PEOPLE WHO WANT MORE CLEAR-CUT ADVICE?

SURE, ALL THE TIME.

"I WANT TO CHANGE BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW. WHAT SHOULD I DO?" THAT KIND.

THING IS, WE'RE WAY PAST THAT...

UM... CHISHIRO-SAN?

HM? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

IT'S EASY TO SIDESTEP THE QUESTION AND JUST TELL THEM TO BE BRAVE OR WHATEVER.

WHEN THAT HAP-PENS,

...IS KIND OF CRUEL, DON'T YOU THINK?

BUT HON-ESTLY,

TELLING PEOPLE WHO COULDN'T HACK IT IN THE REAL WORLD TO JUST SUCK IT UP AND GET BACK TO THE GRIND...

I'M NOT BIG ON SOLUTIONS THAT ARE ALL PRACTICALITY AND NO COMPASSION. I STILL THINK THAT RADIO SHOULD BE A WAY TO ESCAPE.

IT'S A WELFARE PROGRAM ...

...DESIGNED TO PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS WITH ONSITE STAFF WHO CAN ACCOMMODATE THEIR NEEDS.

NANBA-SAN, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF SUPPORTED EMPLOY-MENT?

UM... SORRY, CAN'T SAY I HAVE.

APART FROM THAT, WELL...

THE PROGRAM'S OPEN TO SHUT-INS TOO, SO YOU COULD TRY POINTING THEM THEIR WAY.

YOU'D HAVE TO BE PRETTY LUCKY TO FIND SOME-THING CLOSE TO HOME,

BUT SOMETIMES YOU'LL COME ACROSS SHOPS AND CAFÉS THAT ARE RUN BY FORMER SHUT-INS.

AND OF COURSE, THEY KNOW JUST HOW HARD IT IS TO RETURN TO THE WORK-FORCE,

SO THEY COULD BE SOMEONE TO CON-FIDE IN.

OH, I ALMOST FORGOT ...

MM-HM?

TAKE YOUR TIME GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF WHY THEY BECAME A SHUT-IN, OKAY?

GOOD POINT...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

WHATEVER IT IS WILL HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON HOW YOU SHOULD APPROACH THEM.

ALSO, FIND OUT IF THEY HAVE DEPRESSION OR ANY OTHER MENTAL DISORDERS BEFORE YOU GO ANY FURTHER. WE'RE RADIO HOSTS, NOT SHRINKS.

HAVE YOU SEEN KUREKO-SAN YET?

NOPE, HE'S HERE.

HUH?

DIDN'T HE STAY HOME TO WRITE TODAY?

OH... NANBA-SAN!

YES?

GIVE HIM A PEP TALK WHEN YOU SEE HIM, WILL YOU?

SOUNDS LIKE HE DIDN'T MAKE THE CUT FOR THE LITERARY AWARD.

AH, JEEZ. NOT YOU TOO.

DO I *LOOK* THAT BUMMED ABOUT IT?

HONESTLY, I'M JUST GLAD IT'S OVER. ONE LESS THING TO WORRY ABOUT.

I TOLD YOU MY CHANCES WERE ONE IN TEN AT BEST, DIDN'T I?

IT'S GONNA BE A DOOZY.

OUR LITTLE ADVENTURE IN WASSAMU IS REALLY HELPING ME FLESH OUT THE PLOT I MENTIONED BEFORE.

WHOA, DON'T SAY IT WAS ALL FOR NOTHING.

BUT ALL THAT RE-SEARCH ...

OH... IT'S GOING TO BE SPLIT OVER THREE WEEKS, BUT YEAH...

BY THE WAY, MATO TOLD ME THE NEWS.

WHAT'S THIS I HEAR ABOUT YOU DIRECTING YOUR OWN SEGMENT FOR KODA'S SHOW?

I PLAN TO SUBMIT IT SOMEWHERE ONCE I'M HAPPY WITH IT.

THANK GOODNESS...

I HAVEN'T GIVEN UP ON MAKING A LIVING OFF OF WRITING YET, Y'KNOW.

SURE YOU CAN CRAM ALL THAT INTO THREE 20 MINUTE BLOCKS?

I'M NOT SO SURE ANYMORE.

SHUT-IN REHAB? OOF...

I FELT THIS WHILE WE WERE TALKING TO CHISHIRO-SAN,

BUT I THINK I MIGHT'VE BITTEN OFF MORE THAN I CAN CHEW WITH THIS PROJECT.

LIKE SUDDENLY BEING THRUST INTO EXTRA-ORDINARY CIRCUM-STANCES, FOR ONE.

WELL,

BUT IF YOU ASK ME, I'D SAY THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF THINGS THAT CAN CHANGE PEOPLE IN PROFOUND WAYS.

CHISHIRO DEFINITE-LY HAS A POINT,

SUCH AS?

Burned down...

RIGHT... BUT WE CAN'T EXACTLY *FORCE* SOMETHING LIKE THAT ON HIM, CAN WE?

IF WE WANNA BE POSITIVE, THINK WIN-NING THE LOTTERY.

OR MORE NEGATIVE, LIKE LOSING A FAMILY MEMBER OR HAVING YOUR HOUSE BURN TO THE GROUND. THAT SHIT'LL CHANGE A MAN.

THAT'S ABOUT AS EXTRAORDI-NARY AS IT GETS.

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU WERE JUST IN YOUR ROOM, MINDING YOUR OWN BUSINESS, WHEN SUDDENLY, TWO COMPLETE STRANGERS KICK YOUR DOOR DOWN AND SEND YOUR ASS FLYING?

WELL, TO A LESSER EXTENT, YOU KINDA ALREADY HAVE.

NONE OF KODA'S LISTENERS EXPECT TO HEAR SOME NOK-TIER DOCUMENTARY.

GOOD POINT...

IF FOLLOWING THAT WAS ALL IT TOOK TO SOLVE EVERY-THING, WHY THEY HELL WOULD THEY TURN TO *US* FOR HELP?

BE-SIDES,

Brr...

EVEN IF YOU HAD A MANUAL BY THE MHLW*,

GIVING YOU STEP-BY-STEP CARE ADVICE FOR THIS GUY AND HIS FAMILY,

*MINISTRY OF HEALTH, LABOR, & WELFARE

YEAH.

I TOTALLY FORGOT.

YOU'RE ABSO-LUTELY RIGHT.

BUT SHE HAS A KNACK FOR SOLVING THINGS IN WAYS MOST FOLKS WOULD NEVER EVEN IMAGINE.

...I wanna hear that from.

You're the last person...

KODA MIGHT BE A FLAKY TRAIN WRECK OF A HUMAN BEING,

ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU'RE COUNTING ON?

HAVE A LITTLE MORE FAITH IN HER, ALL RIGHT?

WHY THE HELL ARE YOU BACK?!

FIGURES HE'S WEARING THE SAME CLOTHES ...

WHAT ARE WE, INSURANCE SALESMEN?

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO GET YOU PEOPLE TO LEAVE?!

GOD DAMN IT!

This is just abusive...

OKAY, STRING BEAN. CHANGE INTO THE CLOTHES WE BOUGHT YOU BEFORE I SNAP YOUR SPINE LIKE A TWIG.

POP

KAK

POP

GWAGH!!

QUIT STEP-PING ON ME! ARE YOU A HUMAN MEAT TENDERIZER OR SOME-THING?!

Y'KNOW, LOOKING AT IT OBJECTIVELY, WHAT WE'RE DOING IS KIND OF...AWFUL, ISN'T IT?

UMM...

MAN, YOU AND YOUR DUMB ANALOGIES ...

JUNICHI-SAN.

IF WE WERE TO PLAY THIS AUDIO OVER THE AIR IN THIS DAY AND AGE,

WE COULD EASILY HAVE A HUGE SCANDAL ON OUR HANDS.

AND A HUMANITARI-AN LISTENER HAPPENED TO LISTEN TO IT,

WHO CARES?

IF WE GO DOWN, WE GO DOWN TOGETHER!

HISTORY IS WRITTEN BY THE VICTORS!

...

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN AT WORK?

ACCORDING TO YOUR SISTER'S EMAIL,

YOU USED TO HAVE A STABLE JOB AT A COMPANY.

IT'S ALL HER FAULT.

THAT WOMAN TRIED TO BETRAY US...

OH SURE, YOU DON'T MISS A BEAT WHEN *MIZUHO* ASKS YOU SOME-THING...

WOMAN?

Chapter 52

「I TRUST NO ONE.」

Two girls from your high school are here to see you.

Junichi?

MRS

Alrighty. Can I leave the rest to you, then?

Mom!

I have to get dinner ready.

Whoa! What the–

Wait... Who're you?

Yeah, yeah. 'Scuse us for barging in.

Get the fuck out!

PFF

SHE'S RUTH-LESS...

See, Mizuho? Dude's a total wimp.

Vacay's over, pal. Time to rejoin society.

...By force, if necessary.

IF YOU ASK ME, THIS OUGHTA WORK JUST FINE FOR PART ONE.

YOU CAN TELL FROM THE AUDIO THAT THIS AIN'T NO JOKE.

IT'S JUST, I HAVE SOME BAD NEWS ABOUT PART TWO.

OH... SORRY.

WHY THE LONG FACE?

I'M GIVING YOU PROPS HERE.

...THANK YOU, SIR.

HUH?!

IT LOOKS LIKE A GOOD 80% OF IT WILL HAVE TO BE SCRIPTED.

YES, MA'AM. YOUR BROTHER AGREED TO TALK TO US ABOUT WHY HE SHUT HIMSELF UP IN HIS ROOM.

YOU'RE KID-DING!

NO SHIT. IF HE DID, THEN WE WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE.

HE WOULDN'T OPEN UP TO ME NO MATTER HOW MUCH I PRODDED HIM.

SERI-OUSLY?!

WHY? ARE YOU SAYING I'LL JUST BE IN THE WAY?

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW HARD I'VE TRIED TO HELP HIM?

WELL, SOME-TIMES, IT'S EASIER TO CONFIDE IN STRANGERS THAN FRIENDS OR FAMILY.

ANYWAY, WOULD YOU MIND WAITING OUTSIDE WHILE WE SIT DOWN WITH HIM, ERIKO-SAN?

WE'LL BE SURE TO FILL YOU IN AFTERWARD.

AND PRAYED 100 TIMES AT THE SAPPORO MURA SHRINE FOR HIM TO CHEER UP.

what's your deal...?

I TRIED DRESSING UP AS HIS FAVORITE VIDEO GAME CHARACTER AND INVITING HIM TO ONE OF THOSE NERD CONVENTIONS,

she comes in every single week...

I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MANY HOURS I MET WITH THE HELP CENTER MANAGER AND THE LOCAL COUNSELOR TO DISCUSS IT.

SHE'S THE TYPE WHO KILLS PEOPLE WITH KIND-NESS.

AND *THAT'S* WHY WE NEED YOU TO SIT THIS ONE OUT.

I EVEN BOUGHT THIS BLESSED VASE AND GOOD-LUCK CHARMS!

MAN, I FEEL LIKE A CREW MEMBER ON SOME ENDANGERED ANIMAL DOC-UMENTARY.

GOOD POINT. HE MIGHT CLAM UP IF HE KNOWS WE'RE TAPING IT.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THE RECORD-ER?

SO FAR, WE'VE BEEN RECORDING EVERYTHING WITHOUT HIS PERMISSION, BUT...

SURE, BUT HOW DO WE SNEAK IT IN?

OOH.

WHAT IF WE HIDE IT IN THIS BASKET OF MANDARINS?

YEAH? LET'S HEAR IT.

I HAVE AN IDEA THAT MIGHT JUST WORK.

there we go.

HEY! THE HELL'S ALL THIS?

WE HEARD THAT YOU LIVED IN YAMANASHI PREFECTURE UNTIL MIDDLE SCHOOL, SO WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE MORE COMFORTABLE CHATTING AROUND THE *KOTATSU.**

DON'T JUST SET UP CAMP IN MY ROOM!

*KOTATSU: A LOW TABLE EQUIPPED WITH A HEATER AND COVERED WITH A HEAVY BLANKET

HUH? UH... SURE.

HERE, HOLD THAT END, WILL YOU?

I DON'T NEED IT! GET THIS CRAP OUTTA–

...HUH. THIS ISN'T HALF BAD.

THERE ISN'T A SOUL IN THE WORLD WHO COULD RESIST THE COMFY COMBO OF A *KOTATSU* AND MANDARINS IN WINTER.

NOT THAT US HOKKAIDO-GROWN GIRLS WOULD KNOW.*

SPARE MANDA-RINS

...

C'MON, STRETCH YOUR LEGS OUT. IT'S YOUR ROOM, DUDE.

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO TOUCH GIRLS LEGALLY.

WHA?! SH-SHUT UP!

*OF ALL JAPAN'S PREFECTURES, USE OF KOTATSU IS LEAST COMMON IN HOKKAIDO.

I TRIED TO CHANGE, REALLY, I DID...

I... I KNEW I COULDN'T STAY DEPRESSED OVER MY DAD AND SISTER'S DEATHS FOREVER, Y'KNOW.

S-SO, I TALKED TO NANJO-SAN, ONE OF MY DAD'S OLD COWORKERS,

AND HE GOT ME A JOB AT A SMALL PUBLISHING COMPANY IN NORTHERN HIROSHIMA.

THINKING BACK, I'M SURPRISED THEY EVEN HIRED ME TO BEGIN WITH.

TH-THANK YOU! I-IT'S GOOD TO BE HERE!

GAH HA HA! PICK YOUR JAW UP OFF THE FLOOR, KID!

NOT THAT I BLAME YA. KURATA-CHAN'S GOR-GEOUS.

HI THERE. I'M KANAE KURATA FROM GENERAL AFFAIRS.

I'LL BE BRINGING YOU UP TO SPEED WHILE YOU SETTLE IN. WELCOME ABOARD.

NAME'S EHARA. I'M IN SALES.

EHARA-KUN'S A STUD, AIN'T HE? *DAAAH HA HA!*

P-PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

SORRY. NANJO-SAN CAN BE A *LITTLE* ANNOYING.

OH... I-IT'S FINE, I DON'T MIND.

KURATA-SAN WASN'T JUST NICE. SHE WAS EASILY THE MOST VALUABLE EMPLOYEE AT THE OFFICE.

I'M PICTURING HER WITH GLASSES AND A BOB CUT. THAT COOL?

WOW! YOU WERE LUCKY TO GET HER AS YOUR TRAINER, HUH?

GREAT. I HOPE YOU'LL STICK AROUND FOR A GOOD LONG WHILE.

NOT THAT I CARED. I DIDN'T TAKE ANY PRIDE IN MY JOB. I WAS JUST USING IT TO GET MY LIFE TOGETHER.

SOME OF MY CO-WORKERS EVEN CALLED ME OUT FOR IT.

AS FOR WORK, WELL...

I'VE NEVER BEEN GREAT AT MULTI-TASKING, SO I ONLY GOT STUCK WITH SIMPLE JOBS, AND I BASICALLY NEVER WORKED OVERTIME.

THEN ONE DAY...

NA-NANJO-SAN...

OOH? KURATA-CHAN AND EHARA-KUN, EH?

HEY, JUNICHI-KUN.

DOING A LI'L PEEPING? GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE!

GAH!

STILL...

WHY IS HE TELLING ME ALL THIS? I DIDN'T EVEN ASK...

THOSE TWO USED TO BE AN ITEM, Y'KNOW.

LOOK AT KURATA-CHAN CRYING HER EYES OUT. SHE MUST STILL HAVE A THING FOR HIM.

BY THE WAY, DIDJA HEAR? EHARA-KUN'S GETTING MARRIED TO SOME SINGLE MOM.

SHE'S REALLY SOME-THING, ALL RIGHT.

SHE'S KIND, SMART, HARD-WORKING ...

WH-WHAT DON'T YOU LIKE ABOUT KURATA-SEMPAI?

IT'S GREAT THAT YOU'VE SETTLED IN AND ALL,

BUT YOU MIGHT WANT TO HOLD OFF A BIT BEFORE BUTTING INTO PEOPLE'S PERSONAL LIVES.

WHEN I'M WITH A WOMAN WHO CAN DO EVERY-THING HERSELF, I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER IF SHE REALLY NEEDS ME IN HER LIFE, YOU KNOW?

BUT...

THAT'S JUST NOT WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR IN A WIFE.

BUT SHE'S THE KIND OF PERSON WHO ACTUALLY LOOKS FORWARD TO COOKING AND CLEANING AFTER A HARD DAY'S WORK.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW THIS,

SOME, ANYWAY.

R-REALLY? IS THAT WHAT WOMEN ARE INTO...?

ALSO, I LOVE A MAN WHO KNOWS HOW TO FEAST.

AHH. TOTALLY.

I DEFINITELY PREFER GUYS WHO ARE A LITTLE SPACEY, AS LONG AS THEY CAN HOLD DOWN A JOB, THAT IS.

SAYS THE GUY WHO ONLY PUTS SALT ON HIS PORK CUTLET...

WELL, A MAN'S TASTE IN WOMEN REFINES WITH AGE AFTER ALL.

UH-HUH. SURE...

WA HA HA! YOU ACTUALLY ASKED HIM?!

HOT DAMN! I COULD NEVER BE *THAT* BLUNT ABOUT IT!

MIYUKI ONO, I THINK.

OHH. EHARA-KUN'S FIANCÉE?

SABINA.

MY LATE WIFE'S?

NO, BEFORE THAT...

WHAT DID YOU SAY HER NAME WAS?

...WAIT.

WHAT'RE THE ODDS, HUH?

YOU TWO HAVE THE SAME LAST NAME! *GAH HA HA!*

SHE ALREADY FOUND HIS *REPLACEMENT.*

MY STEPMOM DIDN'T JUST CHEER UP BECAUSE SHE'D GOTTEN OVER MY FATHER'S DEATH.

THAT WAS WHEN IT HIT ME.

AFTER THAT, I KEPT SKIPPING WORK AND EVENTUALLY JUST CALLED IN AND QUIT OVER THE PHONE.

AND I PASSED OUT RIGHT THERE IN THE STORE.

THEN THE ROOM STARTED SPINNING,

WHY DIDN'T THEY TELL ME?

JUST WHAT THE HELL DO THEY PLAN TO DO WITH ME?

...IS THAT MY STEPMOM AND STEPSISTER HAVE BEEN KEEPING ME IN THE DARK ABOUT IT THIS WHOLE TIME.

WHAT REALLY IRKS ME...

SURE IT WASN'T JUST POST-MEAL HYPO-TENSION?

THEY SAY YOU CAN AVOID THAT BY DRINKING COFFEE AND TAKING IRON SUPPLE-MENTS.

Y-YOU THINK SO? IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE A REGULAR DIZZY SPELL TO ME.

THEY'LL PROBABLY TRY TO KICK ME TO THE CURB, BUT SCREW THAT.

AFTER ALL, WHO'D WANT TO MARRY A WOMAN WITH A PROBLEM CHILD AT HOME, RIGHT?

THIS IS MY WAY OF MAKING A STAND.

I'M JUST LEFTOVERS FROM HIS FIANCÉE'S PREVIOUS MARRIAGE.

I MEAN, AS FAR AS EHARA-SAN IS CONCERNED,

WHY WOULD HE WELCOME ME IN HIS HOME?

MINARE-SAN!

WATCH IT, JUNICHI. EVEN IF YOU HOLE UP IN YOUR ROOM, THEY CAN DITCH YOUR ASS ANYTIME THEY WANT.

IF THEY START PACKING UP THE HOUSE, THAT'S A BAD SIGN.

R-REALLY?

THAT'S JUST SILLY.

YOU'RE FAMILY, SIMPLE AS THAT. THERE'S NO WAY THEY'D JUST TOSS YOU OUT LIKE—

ERIKO-SAN!
BAM!
YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG, JUNICHI!

I MEAN,
IT'S JUST WRONG!
DO YOU REALLY WANT YOUR OLD COWORKER TO BECOME YOUR NEW FATHER?!

I WASN'T TRYING TO KEEP YOU IN THE DARK!
I WAS TRYING TO TALK MOM OUT OF RE-MARRYING!

YOUR SISTER SURE WEARS A LOT OF VINTAGE DRESSES, HUH?

BUT DON'T YOU THINK FINDING A NEW PARTNER IS JUST PART OF MOVING ON? WHY ARE YOU SO AGAINST IT?

ERIKO-SAN! I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T SAY THIS IN FRONT OF YOUR BROTHER,

WAIT... SO, IT *IS* TRUE?!

DON'T YOU FEEL SORRY FOR HIM?!

WHY?!

YOU HEARD JUNICHI!

ERIKO-SAN, PLEASE!

NO WAY...

DO YOU REALLY THINK HE'LL BULLY ME?

GOD DAMN IT! NOT ON MY WATCH!

I KNOW *I* COULDN'T BEAR TO LIVE LIKE THAT!

WE AREN'T BLOOD-RELATED, AND THEY USED TO WORK TOGETHER!

YOU CAN BET HE'LL TREAT JUNICHI LIKE GARBAGE!

oh, wow...

ACTUALLY, I HEARD THIS THROUGH THE GRAPE-VINE AFTER I QUIT,

BUT IT TURNS OUT SHE WAS MAR-RIED THE WHOLE TIME!

THEY SAY PEOPLE USUALLY CHEAT ON THEIR SPOUSES WITH EXES, BUT STILL...

THEN WHY THE HELL WAS SHE CRYING BACK THEN?!

color me curious.

SAY, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE LOVELY MISS KURATA, ANYWAY?

HUH...? OH, HER?

I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE ANYMORE.

FIRST MY STEP-MOM,

THEN THE WOMAN I PINED FOR...

IS EVERY-THING I KNOW A LIE?!

THE ONLY PEOPLE I COULD TRUST WERE MY DAD AND LITTLE SISTER, AND THEY'RE GONE.

UH-OH. SEEMS OUR SHUT-IN FRIEND'S FALLEN DOWN A GNOSTICISM HOLE.

...NO, WAIT.

ERIKO-SAN, YOU **REALLY** AREN'T HELPING...

WHAT IF THIS WORLD WAS NEVER REAL TO BEGIN WITH?!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHARE ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO!

I SWEAR I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE SOMEDAY! YOU CAN TRUST ME!

I'LL NEVER BETRAY YOU, JUNICHI!

SO, I ASKED HIS MOTHER TO CHECK THE AUDIO AFTER WE FINISHED,

NO DOUBT.

AND SURE ENOUGH, SHE TOSSED OUT NEARLY ALL OF IT.

...YUP, SURE SOUNDS LIKE A CLUSTER-FUCK.

YES... BUT I TRIED LOOKING AT THINGS FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE AND HAD AN IDEA.

WEREN'T YOU SET ON DOING A DOCU-MENTARY?

WELL, GETTING A SCRIPT READY SHOULDN'T BE AN ISSUE, BUT ARE *YOU* OKAY WITH THAT?

AND TELL THEM WE WROTE FILLER FOR THE MISSING SECTIONS ON SHORT NOTICE.

I THINK WE SHOULD BE UPFRONT WITH THE AUDIENCE ABOUT THE SCRAPPED FOOTAGE,

THAT WAY, WE CAN STICK WITH THE DOCU-MENTARY FORMAT WHILE LETTING THEM ENJOY THE CONTENT FOR WHAT IT IS.

AMA RADIO

SHE'S SOUNDING MORE LIKE A RADIO DIRECTOR EVERY DAY.

A DREAMLAND OF BREAD AND CURRY. VOYAGER

FOR STARTERS, HIS STEP-SISTER'S LOCO.

YOU THINK?

OH, I'M SURE SHE IS. ON THE SURFACE, ANYWAY.

SOUNDS TO ME LIKE SHE'S REALLY WORRIED ABOUT HIM.

THINGS WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN NEARLY THIS COMPLICATED IF SHE'D JUST TOLD HIM ABOUT HER MOM'S REMARRIAGE AS SOON AS IT CAME UP.

I RECKON *SHE'S* THE ONE WHO'S REALLY AGAINST THE WHOLE THING.

SHE MUST'VE BEEN CLOSE WITH LITTLE JUNICHI'S DAD.

YESTER-DAY, YOU MENTIONED WANTING TO DECORATE THE STORE WITH TOAD-FLAX,

SO I MADE A LIST OF FLOWER SHOPS NEARBY THAT SELL THEM.

YOU DID? WHY, THANK YOU, DEAR.

HM?

SHE'D MAKE A GREAT ACTIVIST SOMEDAY.

ALSO, SOME-THING TELLS ME SHE'S GETTING A KICK OUT OF PLAYING THE CAR-ING BIG SISTER.

WHAT'S THIS LIST OF PHONE NUMBERS?

OH! I WROTE THEM DOWN.

Good money, my ass.

AND ON THE OTHER, A SLACKER BEING PAID GOOD MONEY TO GAB ABOUT HER SIDE GIG ON THE CLOCK.

ON ONE HAND, I HAVE A GIRL WHO'S WORKING FOR FREE YET ONLY WANTS WHAT'S BEST FOR THE STORE.

OH, JUST TRYING TO REMEMBER WHAT TOAD-FLAX STAND FOR.

WHAT WAS THAT?!

DOES HE SERIOUSLY THINK FLOWERS JIVE WITH A RESTAURANT THAT PLAYS TALK RADIO ALL DAY?

THEY'RE TRYING SO HARD NOT TO MAKE EYE CONTACT...

CHA-CHALA CHA CHA CHA-CHALA CHA CHA

ESPECIALLY TACHIBANA-SAN.

HONESTLY, I'M MORE CURIOUS ABOUT THEM THAN MR. SHUT-IN, BUT WORK'S WORK...

I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME WE DROP THE FORMALITIES AND GET DOWN AND DIRTY!

I WAS JUST TELLING THE OTHERS ABOUT OUR BOY.

HOW 'BOUT YOU PUT DOWN THE PHONE AND WORK FOR ONCE?!

What formalities?

WHAT'S UP, MIZUHO?

NOW? YEAH, I CAN TALK.

S'NOT LIKE I'VE GOT ANYTHING BETTER TO DO.

LET'S GO WITH PLAN C!

I don't remember having a plan A or B, but sure, why not?

ANYHOW, MIND LETTING ME TAKE THE WHEEL FOR A BIT?

Chapter 13 「 I WANT TO USE WHATEVER I CAN. 」

SAKI...

HEY, JUNICHI! YOU LITTLE FREAK...

NO, WAIT...

I-IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

WHAT THE HELL'D YOU PUT ON MY DOLL?

HELLO? I WAS ALL ABOUT STREET STYLE, REMEMBER?

LOOK, I GET YOUR DEAL WITH MOM, BUT IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HATE ERI, RIGHT?

OH, THE PAIN, THE AGONYYY.

FOR REAL, THOUGH. WOULDN'T THIS LOOK WAY BETTER ON ERI?

THE DOLL MAKER WHO TAUGHT ME...

...GAVE ME THAT DRESS FOR FREE. IT'S NOT SOME WEIRD FETISH THING, ALL RIGHT?

NO, I DON'T *HATE* HER. SHE JUST GETS ANNOYING SOMETIMES. OR LIKE...

I MEAN,

SHE'S ALWAYS PUT ME FIRST, SO...

...FREAKY, EVEN.

GASP

GOD DAMN IT...

JUST A DREAM?

HUH?! WHA—

THE FUCK?! WHERE'D IT...

...IT'S GONE.

TNK

TNK

TNK

WHAT...

...THE HELL?

AH!

17½ DASH

WHAT SAY WE JUST SHOOT THE SHIT TODAY?

ALRIGHTY.

Y'SEE, OUR LAST LITTLE SESSION TAUGHT US A VALUABLE LESSON. THERE'S NO POINT IN GETTING A JUICY STORY IF IT'S TOO RICH TO EVEN AIR.

YO, KEEP IT TOGETHER, JUNICHI.

...HUH? WHAT?

SAYS THE PHONY WHO RECORDED THE WHOLE THING RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE...

MINARE-SAN! AT LEAST *TRY* TO DENY IT!

NO SHIT, SHER-LOCK!

YOU PEOPLE DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT ME OR MY FAMILY. YOU JUST WANTED MATERIAL FOR YOUR STUPID RADIO SHOW.

OH... NO.

I DIDN'T, JUST...

WELL... I DOUBT YOU'LL BELIEVE ME, BUT WHATEVER.

...

HEY, JUNICHI-SAN.

DID YOU PUT YOUR DOLL AWAY? BUT SHE WAS SO CUTE...

LAST NIGHT, I WOKE UP AND SAW THAT THE DOLL WAS MISSING.

THEN, WHEN I LOOKED OUTSIDE, I SAW A WOMAN STANDING IN THE STREET WHO LOOKED JUST LIKE HER, OR SHOULD I SAY...LIKE MY LITTLE SISTER.

THIS GUY?

MIND ADDING JUST A TOUCH MORE REALISM?

NO, I... WAIT, WHAT'S WITH THE CARD?!

Spin a fairly believable yarn.

I FIGURED CHATTING OFF-THE-CUFF MIGHT BE A LI'L MUCH FOR AN AMATEUR,

AND EVEN WITH RADIO'S LOOSE COMPLIANCE STANDARDS, HALF OF THESE COULDN'T BE AIRED WITHOUT BLEEPING MOST OF IT...

Enter-tainers you think are overrated

Relation-ship horror stories

Talk shit about the Central League

They say all jobs matter, but let's be real about it

Spin a fairly believable yarn

Rant about a shitty game you were duped into buying recently

THERE ISN'T A SINGLE POSITIVE TOPIC IN THE STACK...

SO I WENT AHEAD AND WROTE DOWN SOME TOPICS TO DRAW FROM.

WHO DOES THIS LOSER THINK HE IS?

DO YOU WANT ME TO SHUN SOCIETY EVEN MORE? HUH?!

JUST TAKE MY WORD FOR IT!

I SWEAR I'M TELLING THE TRUTH!

THE DOLL REALLY CAME TO LIFE!

IT'S LIKE THE LEGEND ABOUT THE OSAKI DOLL, RIGHT?

STILL, I BELIEVE YOU, MAN.

TH-THE *WHAT?*

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A SAMURAI SERVING THE LORD OF SHIRAKAWA NAMED TAKIGAMI WHO LIVED ALONE WITH HIS YOUNG DAUGHTER AFTER LOSING HIS WIFE.

IT'S AN OLD FOLK TALE FROM THE HIDA REGION OF GIFU PREFECTURE.

ONE NIGHT, HE ROUSED FROM SLUMBER,

ONLY TO FIND THAT THE DOLL WAS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN, AND THE GLOW OF CRIMSON EMANATING FROM THE GARDEN THROUGH THE PAPER DOOR.

AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, HIS DAUGHTER WAS TAKEN FROM HIM BY ILLNESS SOON AFTER,

AND IN THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR, HE CRAFTED A DOLL IN HER IMAGE THAT HE LOVED AS HIS OWN KIN.

CAUTIOUSLY, TAKIGAMI PEEKED INTO THE GARDEN,

WHERE HE SAW A GIRL BURNING SOMETHING INTENTLY OVER A BONFIRE.

UPON CLOSER INSPECTION, TAKIGAMI REALIZED THE GIRL BORE A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE TO HIS LATE DAUGHTER, OSAKI,

AND THAT SHE WAS BURNING NONE OTHER THAN HIS SAMURAI ROBES.

TAKIGAMI DECIDED TO FEIGN ILL AND TAKE THE DAY OFF.

THAT SAME NIGHT, JANUARY 18TH, 1586,

AFTER SEARCHING THE HOUSE HIGH AND LOW,

DUMBFOUNDED AND WITH NOTHING TO WEAR TO WORK,

TAKIGAMI COULD FIND NO TRACE OF THE OSAKI DOLL OR HIS UNIFORM.

JUST THEN, TAKIGAMI LOST CONSCIOUSNESS AND AWOKE ONCE MORE WHEN THE SUN WAS HIGH.

A SUDDEN MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE TRIGGERED A LANDSLIDE...

...THAT SWALLOWED KAERIKUMO CASTLE WHERE HE WAS STATIONED WHOLE ALONG WITH THE SURROUNDING TOWN.

HAVING MIRACULOUSLY STAYED HOME, TAKIGAMI WAS ONE OF ONLY FOUR SURVIVORS WHO WERE SPARED FROM THE EARTHQUAKE'S WRATH.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...

...EVEN DOLLS CAN RETURN THE LOVE THEY RECEIVE.

I...

WELL,

...

ASSUMING THAT GIRL REALLY WAS THE DOLL YOU MADE,

I MADE UP ALL THAT OSAKI DOLL STUFF, THOUGH.

OH, SCREW YOU!

BUT... SHIT, YOU HAD ME FOOLED.

Spin a fairly believable yarn

DON'TCHA THINK SHE WAS TRYING TO GET YOU TO COME OUTSIDE TOO?

IF SHE WAS STANDING OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW,

BUT... WHAT IF IT'S TRUE?

FORGIVE ME, SAKI...

I'M JUST... TOO SCARED TO FIND ANOTHER JOB.

TNK

HUH?
NO
WAY...

TNK

SAKI
...

IT'S
REALLY
HER.

SHIT!

BAM

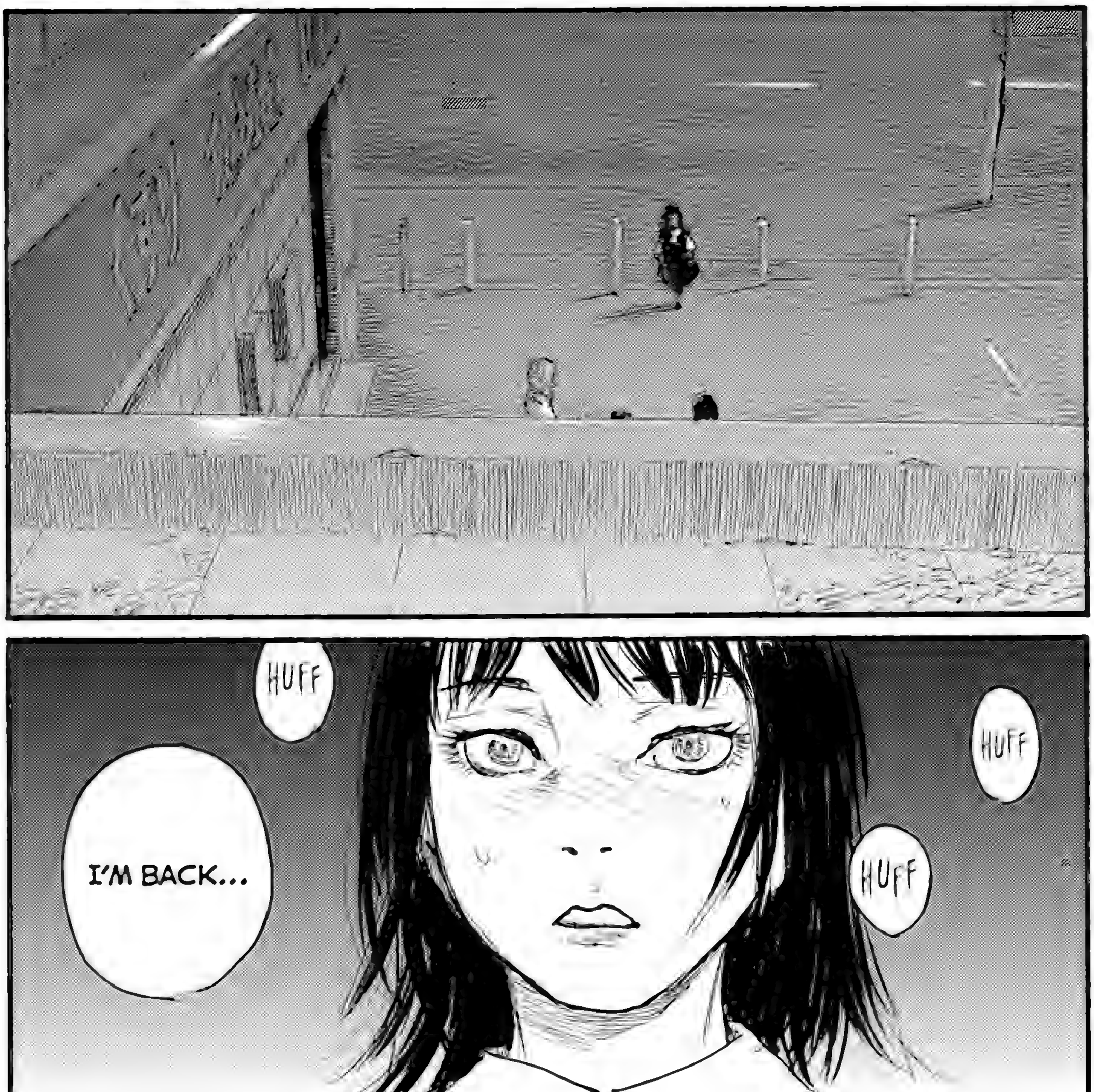
AH!

W-
WAIT!

FUCK, FUCK! WHERE ARE MY SHOES?!

AND UP
AND UP
AND UP
AND UP

*screen door.



HUFF
I'M BACK...
HUFF
HUFF

NICE WORK.

DID MY BROTHER CHASE AFTER YOU?

NO... I DON'T THINK SO.

BUT I DID HEAR HIM OPEN THE FRONT DOOR.

HIM? NO WAY.

IRK

JUNICHI'S THE FORMER.

MY GUESS IS HIS EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE EXTENDS MAYBE TEN METERS FROM THE HOUSE.

OH! THANK YOU.

THERE ARE TWO TYPE OF SHUT-INS: THOSE WHO WON'T STEP FOOT OUTSIDE, AND THOSE WHO WILL GO TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE AT MOST.

PHEW.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY BROTHER?!

ERIKO-SAN, PLEASE KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.

HE DOES HAVE A SIMILAR VIBE TO SAKI.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

HERE HE IS. WHATCHA THINK?

SAKI NEVER WORE DRESSES, BUT IF I SAW HIM IN THE DARK, EVEN I'D SWEAR HE WAS THE REAL THING.

OH, MY GOD! THAT'S INCREDI-BLE!

DO YOU MIND IF I KEEP THIS?!

AND THIS IS HIM ALL DOLLED UP.

RGH...

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT...

JUNICHI'S BEEN WILLING TO TALK TO US SO FAR,

BUT HE PROBABLY WON'T LISTEN TO ANYONE BUT HIS OWN FLESH AND BLOOD.

THAT'S OUR HYPOTHESIS, ANYHOW.

SHE SOUNDS LIKE A PIMP...

HE'S BASICALLY MY SLAVE FOR *MONETARY* REASONS.

THAT'S WHERE HIROMI HERE COMES IN. IT CAME TO ME WHILE I WAS LOOKING AT A PHOTO OF JUNICHI'S SISTER IN HIS ROOM.

DIDN'T YOU CALL IT PLAN C THE OTHER DAY?

UM... DON'T YOU MEAN "SISTER"?

FAIR ENOUGH. PLAN S, THEN.

I CALL IT PLAN D.

D AS IN "DAUGHTER."

Chapter 54 「 BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY. 」

FEELS LIKE AGES SINCE WE LAST GOT COFFEE TOGETHER.

LONG TIME NO SEE.

AND AS I RECALL, THE LAST TIME I TOOK YOU UP ON YOUR OFFER...

MHM.

BINGO!

SOOO, ABOUT MINARE KODA...

YOU BEGGED ME FOR A FAVOR LAST TIME TOO.

FOR THE LATE-NIGHT BLOCK?

WELL, WHO KNOWS HOW STUFFY IT'LL END UP WITH MINARE BEHIND THE WHEEL.

WHY GO WITH SUCH A STUFFY THEME?

THING IS, I'M HAVING HER TAPE A BIT ABOUT SHUT-IN REHAB AT THE MOMENT...

RADIO'S TRUE CHARGE IS EMERGENCY BROADCASTS, AFTER ALL.

I FIGURED WHY NOT WORK ON HER NEWS-READING SKILLS WHILE WE'RE AT IT, Y'KNOW?

AND WHILE I WOULDN'T EXACTLY CALL IT THE PERFECT OPPORTU-NITY,

WELL, SHIT. WHEN YOU PUT IT *THAT* WAY...

WASN'T IT HER IMPROV SKILLS THAT CAUGHT YOUR EYE?

I'M SURE SHE'D MANAGE.

BUT WE'RE BASICALLY RUNNIN' A SKELETON CREW DURING WAVE'S SLOT, SO...WHAT CAN YOU DO?

WE'VE GOT ENOUGH ANCHORS TO COVER DAYTIME,

IS THAT ALL?

'PRE-CIATE IT.

ANYWAY, IF THOSE ARE YOUR ORDERS, MISTER DIRECTOR, HOW CAN I REFUSE?

I'M JUST A SIMPLE ANCHOR.

HITOMI'S BIRTHDAY'S NEXT WEEK, RIGHT?

WHAT'S THE OC-CASION?

YOU USUALLY MAIL HER PRESENT.

WAS SHE CRYING?

NOPE. SHE WAS CACKLING LIKE A MANIAC.

THEN WHAT'S THE PROB-LEM?

HITOMI WAS STANDING IN A DARK ROOM ALL ALONE.

I HAD A NIGHT-MARE THE OTHER NIGHT.

WELL, BE SEEING YOU.

HOPE SO. WE WORK ON THE SAME FLOOR, REMEMBER?

WOULDJA LOOK AT THAT. NOT EVERY DAY YOU SEE MATO 'N OHORI TOGETHER.

THINK THEY'RE LOOKIN' TO PATCH THINGS UP?

HWA!

EL-DRAGUE

?

HEY, KID. YOU STILL CHASIN' THAT A.D. GIRL'S TAIL?

WHO TOLD YOU THAT?!

KAKOEN-SAN! LONG TIME NO SEE!

WHERE THE HELL DOES HE WORK ALL DAY?

MATO-SAN AND OHORI-SAN? SERI-OUSLY?

YOU BET. THEY GOT THE FULL WORKPLACE ROMANCE EXPERIENCE.

YOU DIDN'T KNOW? THOSE TWO USED TO BE MARRIED.

WAIT... DID YOU SAY "PATCH THINGS UP"?

YEESH... I DON'T THINK I COULD WORK WITH MY EX.

I MEAN, IF WE HAD A KID, I WOULDN'T GET DIVORCED IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT STILL...

BUD, FOR SOMEONE YOUR AGE, YOU SURE ARE BEHIND THE TIMES.

YOU'RE A DIVORCEE TOO, HUH?

S'FINE THAT FAMILIES COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.

AND SOME STAY STRAIGHT DESPITE ONLY HAVIN' ONE PARENT, LIKE MY BOY.

SOME KIDS GO OFF THE RAILS EVEN WITH BOTH FOLKS AT HOME.

I THINK IT'S NICE THAT FAMILIES COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.

MMM. I ACTUALLY THINK HE'S SOMEONE WHO REALLY SHINES UNDER PRESSURE.

MA'AM, PLEASE TRY TO SEE WHERE JUNICHI-SAN'S COMING FROM...

SEE?! THIS IS WHAT I MEAN!

WHENEVER I BRING IT UP, SHE ALWAYS PULLS THIS!

I CAN TOTALLY SEE THAT.

WHA?!

YOU'RE THE TYPE WHO SPOILS PEOPLE ROTTEN.

HONESTLY, DON'T YOU THINK *YOU'VE* BABIED HIM TOO MUCH, ERIKO?

MM-HM.

I KINDA FEEL BAD FOR JUNICHI-SAN...

SOMEONE NEEDS TO LEARN JUST HOW SCUMMY SOCIETY REALLY IS.

I'VE NEVER MET MY FATHER, AND I BASICALLY GREW UP IN THE CULT,

MINARE-SAN...

BUT SINCE I HAD MOM, I WAS NEVER *AFRAID* OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

UM... R-RIGHT.

YEAH. SHE'S LIKE A WALKING EXAMPLE OF WHAT *NOT* TO DO.

YOUR MOTHER SOUNDS VERY KIND.

THE DAY BEFORE HIS WEDDING,

HE GAVE ME A CORAL NECKLACE AND TOLD ME, "MII-CHAN, FROM NOW ON, THIS WILL KEEP YOU SAFE."

WHAT TROPICAL FOLKTALE DID YOU TWO FALL OUT OF?

WAIT, *MII-CHAN?!*

MY BROTHER STILL TRIES TO GIVE ME AN ALLOWANCE WHENEVER I GO HOME FOR THE NEW YEAR'S.

LIKE, HOW OLD DOES HE THINK I AM?

FOR REAL? TRADE YOU MY DAD FOR YOUR BRO.

MY FAMILY IS MY PARENTS, ME, AND MY OLDER BROTHER.

I'D SAY WE'RE CLOSER THAN YOU'D EXPECT.

OF COURSE YOU ARE.

SO, WHAT'S THE PLAN FOR TONIGHT?

GO HOME AND CATCH SOME Z'S, BUT CAN YOU GET UP AROUND TWO?

WE'LL PICK YOU UP.

TIME TO TOSS THAT OVERGROWN CHICK OUTTA THE NEST WITH TECH.

HCB

HCB

Uh-huh... Tried to brush her cheek and had a brush with the law, eh?

Ah, lemme alone... Hey, Gram. Where's a guy supposed to find true love in this dump?

There ain't no cure for puberty, kiddo. That's as old as humanity.

I THOUGHT YOU AND THE MISSUS WERE LOVEBIRDS.

WHAT? WHY?

OOF... I DO *NOT* WANNA GO HOME RIGHT NOW.

HOKKAIDO CENTRAL BROADCASTING HCB

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK 70S SLEAZE STILL FLIES IN 2015?

wow...

5

EVEN THE LEGENDARY TSURUKO WROTE "ADULTERY BREEDS ART" IN HIS *70S COMEDY BANTER...*

OH... I THINK I GET THE PICTURE.

YEAH, WELL, REMEMBER THAT GIRL I ADDED ON LINE LAST WEEK 'CAUSE OF THAT THING?

COOL. MIND IF WE SIT DOWN IN THE MEETING ROOM FOR A SEC?

sigh...

NO... I WAS JUST GOING TO CALL IT A NIGHT.

NEED TO BE ANYWHERE, TACHIBANA-SAN?

WHAT WAS THE CURRY GUY'S NAME AGAIN? NAKAHARA-KUN?

HM?

BE REAL WITH ME, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HIM?

UM... I'M NOT SURE I...

OH, DON'T TAKE IT THE WRONG WAY.

OR DO, WHATEV.

YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO GET YOUR WRITING SKILLS UP TO TV-LEVEL, RIGHT?

WELL, I MENTIONED YOU TO OUR DIRECTOR WHO ALWAYS TUNES IN...

Y- YES! I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT THAT...

REMEMBER WHEN YOU CAME OVER TO MY PLACE DRUNK A WHILE BACK?

...AND HE SAID HE WANTS TO MEET YOU.

AND WHILE I'D LOVE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO TWO,

I WANTED TO CHECK IN WITH YOU WHILE YOU WERE SOBER FIRST.

TELL ME.

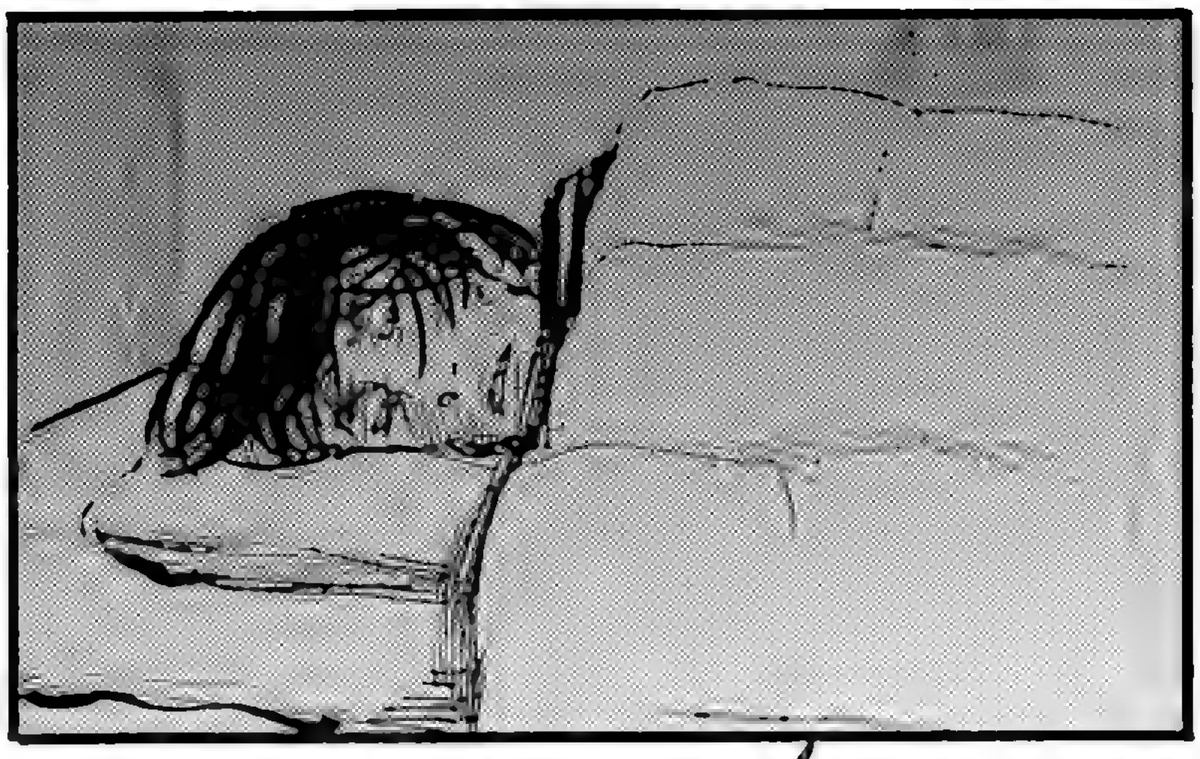
IF SCRIPT-WRITING BECOMES A FULL-TIME GIG,

CAN YOU GIVE UP YOUR JOB AT THE CURRY JOINT?

I CAN...

...

YES...



FRUMP

SA-

SAKI...

COME WITH ME, JUNICHI.

I'M SURE OF IT.

HER ATTI-TUDE, TOO.

THAT'S HER VOICE...

SA... SAKI!

MP4 PLAYER + MICRO SPEAKER (TECH)

AHH... 'ZAT HOW YOU DO IT?

THINK TEENAGE YUI ARAGAKI!

NO, NO! SAKI'S VOICE WAS MORE...

SORRY TO BOTH-ER YOU, KOMOTO-SAN.

UH-OH...

WE'RE COUNTIN' ON YOU, HIROMI.

MM? NOPE.

MINARE-SAN, IS THE CAR ON?

ズ・・・ズズ・・・

...?

OH!

BWEE BWEE BWEE

EARTH-QUAKE ALERT...

KA-BOOM

WHOA!
I THINK IT'S A BIG ONE!
GRRRR
GR
CHRG

ズ。R
ズR
ズR
ズR
ズR
ズR
ズR
ズR

DRG
DRG
DRG
DRG
DRG
AH, HELL! OF ALL THE LOUSY TIMING...

Chapter 55 「INCONCEIVABLE」

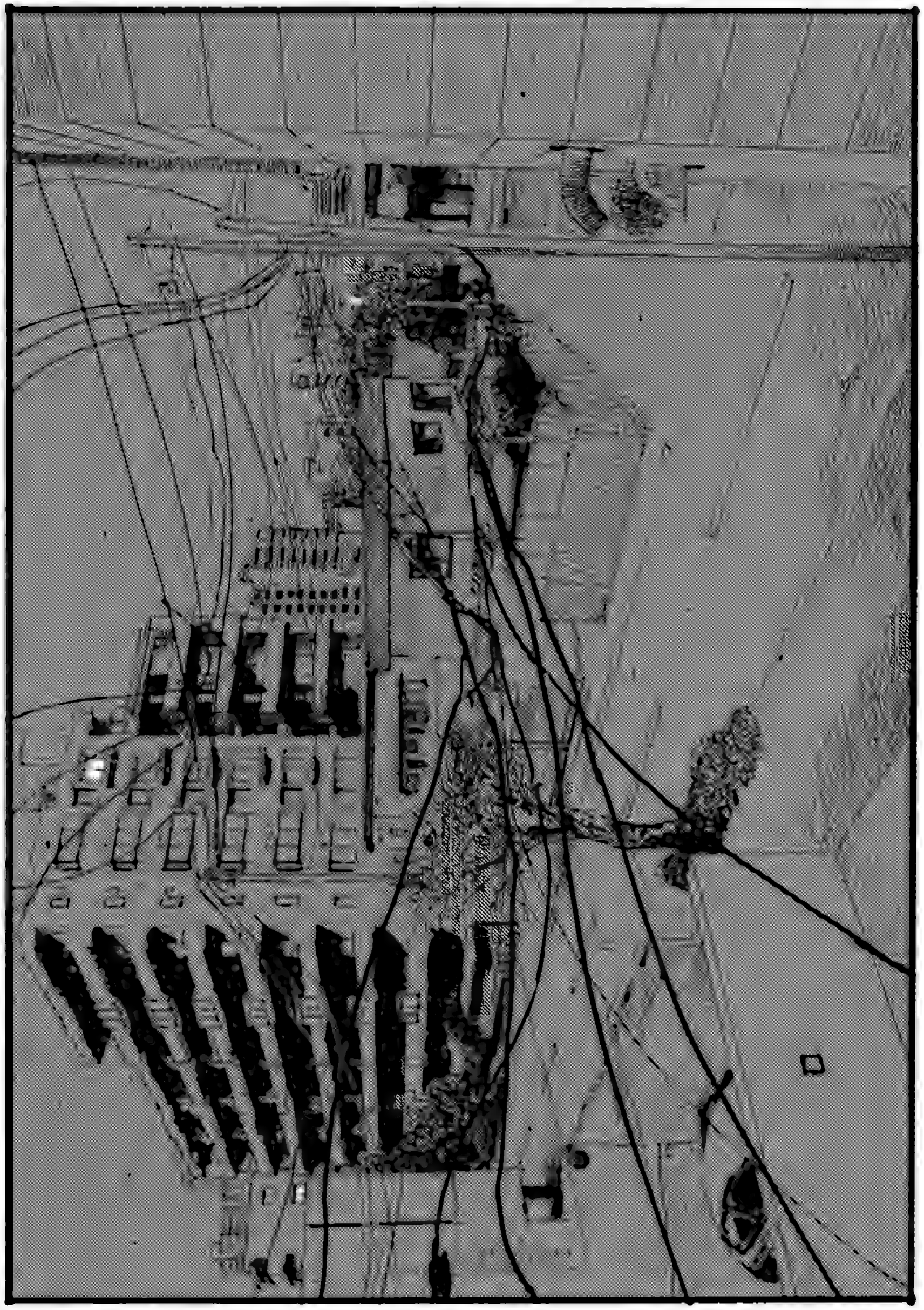
KRRK...

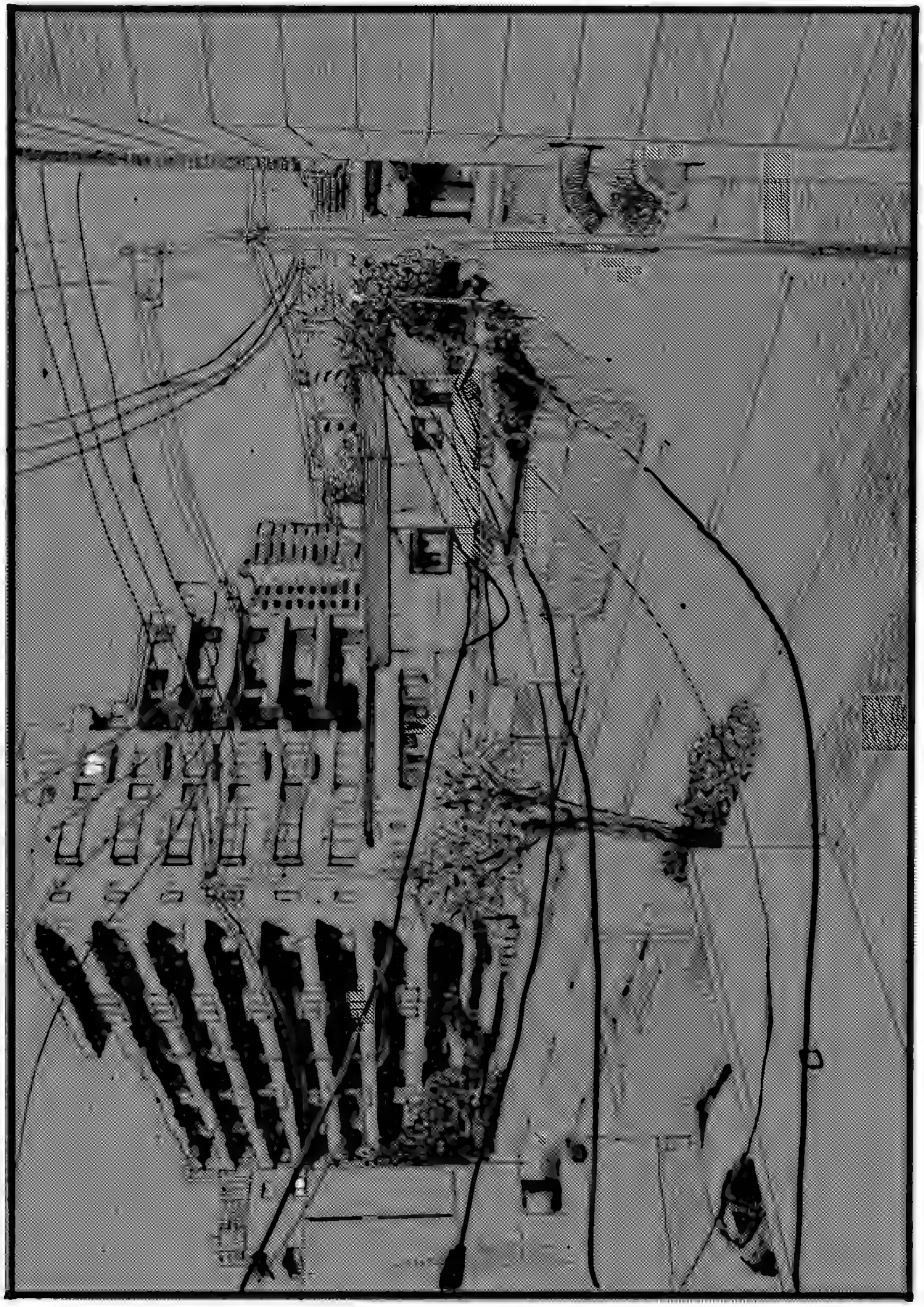
KAKA

KEEK

AH...
UAH...
WHA?!

LIL DUG
LIL DRD
LIL BRR
LIL FRR
LIL KID
LIL R





KLATTR
KLAK
PKSH
KSSH

ボオオオオオオン
BWOOOOOOM
DAIMARU

KRK CHRK
KTSSH

...I THINK IT'S STILL SHAKING A LITTLE.

...WE GOOD?

THAT CRACK'S RIGHT OUT OF A DISASTER FLICK.

YWOOF!

HOW'RE THINGS AT THE STATION?

HELLO? MATO-SAN?

OH, UM... YES, WE'RE FINE.

NAH, WE'RE FINE. HIROSE JUST HAPPENED TO WALK IN.

IT'S A GODDAMN MESS OVER HERE.

OOP. JMA* JUST POSTED AN UPDATE. LOOKS LIKE THE EPICENTER WAS IBURI...

*JMA: JAPAN METEOROLOGICAL AGENCY

Y-YES, SIR!

G'HEAD AND RUN THIS.

4 FEET

4 FEET

ANYHOW, NO ONE'S HURT, BUT WE'RE KINDA SHORTHANDED AT THE MOMENT, SO IF YOU COULD COME BACK TO THE OFFICE THAT'D BE GREAT.

BACK. SORRY 'BOUT THAT.

THERE ARE SOME SIGNS OF LIQUEFACTION UNDER THE ROAD, SO I'M NOT SURE IF WE SHOULD RISK DRIVING...

Lique-faction?! You sure?

SURE, UM... AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO,

UHH.... DUNNO.

S'KINDA HARD TO TELL IN THE DARK, BUT...EHH, IT'S *PROBA-BLY* FINE.

CHA CHA-LA CHA CHA CHA CHA-LA CHA CHA

WE'VE GOT MAYBE 20 OR SO...

BETTER GET THE F1 OUTTA HERE BEFORE□

...BEFORE THEY START SHUTTING DOWN ROADS AND DIRECTING TRAFFIC.

HELLO?

Koda-san? This is Hiromi's mother. Is everyone all right?

Can you give him the phone, please?

I've been trying to call Hiromi's cell phone, but he isn't picking up.

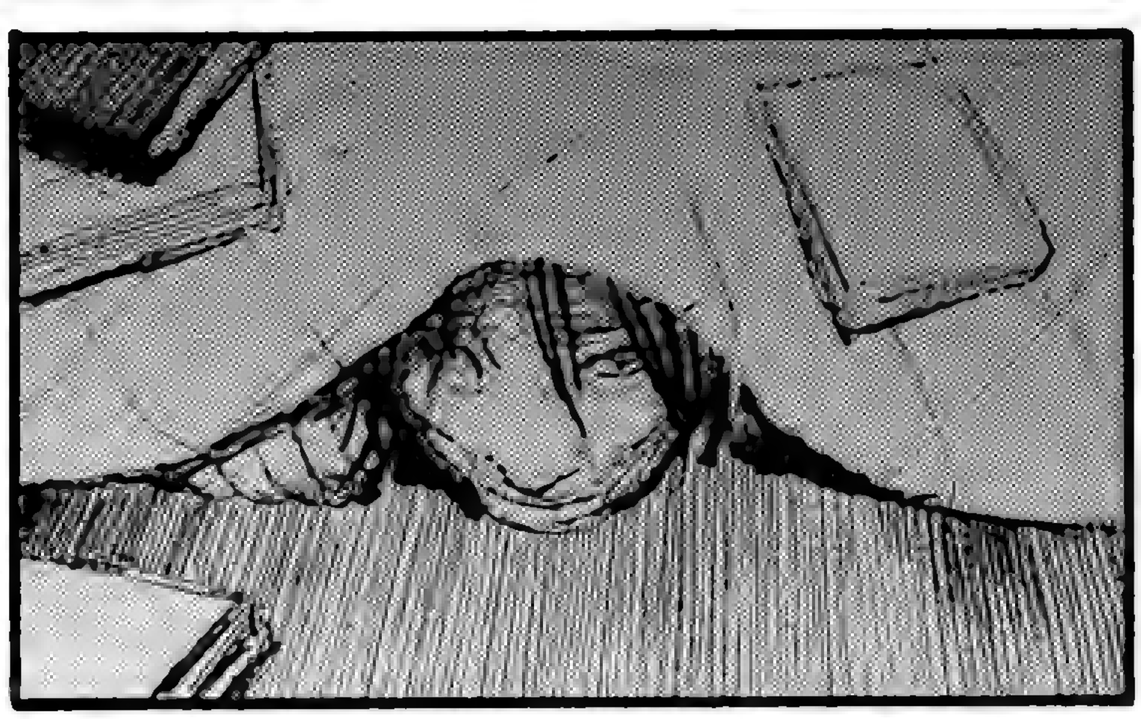
WAIT... SERIOUSLY?!

OHH, SHIT.

Y-YEAH, HE'S HERE! HE'S JUST, UHH... PICKING FLOWERS, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

ANYWAY, I PROMISE I'LL GET HIM HOME SAFE!

What is that supposed to mean? Isn't he with you?!



FLICK

S-
SAKI...?
NO, NO,
NO...

JUNICHI?!
ARE YOU
OKAY?!

SAKIII!

YOU OKAY?

Y-YES, I'M FINE.

OH, JIRO-SAN! YOU'RE STILL HERE?

YEESH. NOT EVERY DAY WE GET A QUAKE LIKE THAT IN HOKKAIDO.

YES, SIR. THE QUAKE PEAKED AT A HIGH SIX IN ABIRA.

ANY WORD FROM THE AGENCY?

REALLY?! THAT'D BE GREAT, ACTUALLY!

HEY, SUWA-KUN. YEAH, IF YOU NEED A HAND WITH ANYTHING, JUST LEMME KNOW.

TACHIBANA-SAN! THANK GOD! WHERE ARE YOU?

YEAH, I'M FINE. SOME STUFF FELL OFF THE SHELVES, BUT THAT'S ABOUT IT.

I JUST GOT OFF THE PHONE WITH TAKARADA-SAN AND I'M ABOUT TO GO CHECK ON THE SHOP.

A SIX?!

HELLO? NAKA-HARA-SAN?

ANYWAY, I'M GONNA BE OUT FOR A WHILE, SO DO YOU THINK YOU COULD COME BACK TO THE APARTMENT?

...I DUNNO. I'D RATHER NOT CLOSE FOR THE DAY, BUT WE'LL SEE.

EVEN IF YOU WERE WRITING FULL-TIME, THERE'S NOTHIN' FOR YOU TO DO HERE RIGHT NOW.

GO HOME.

SURE, BUT, UM...

?!

MAT SHOW

?!

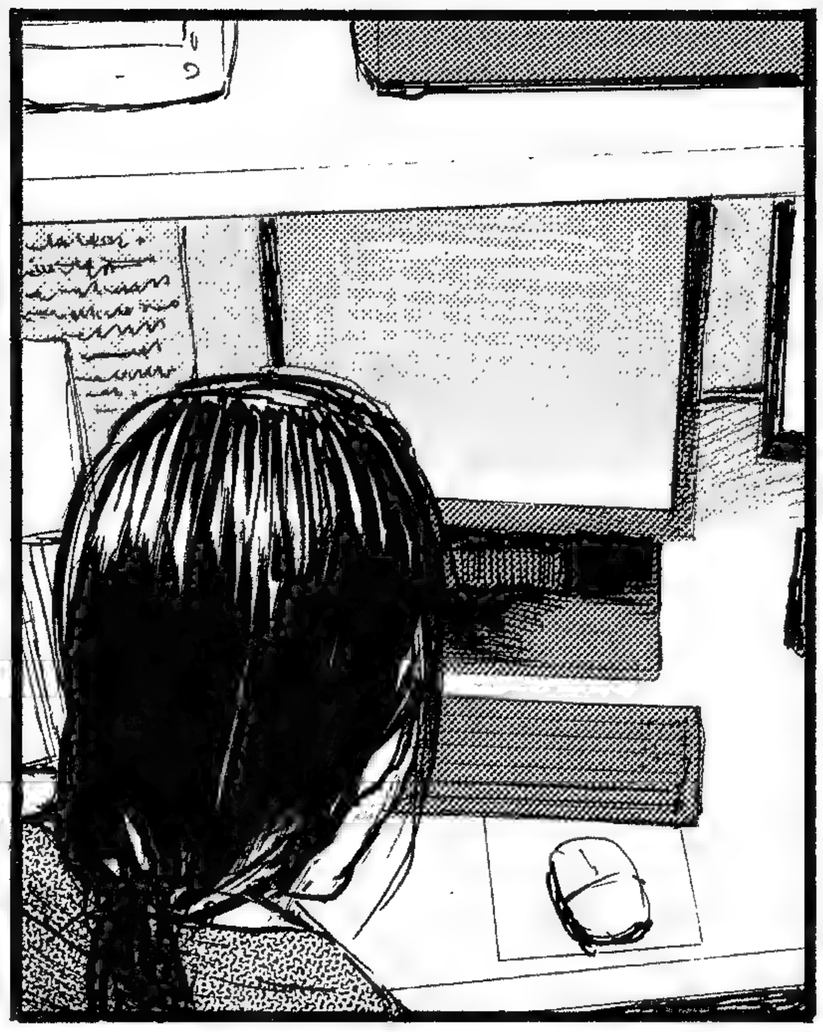
HEY! THE HELL WAS THAT?!

CLACK

MATO-SAN!

LOOKS LIKE THE BUILDING SWITCHED TO BACKUP POWER. THINK THE WHOLE CITY'S OUT?

KASHIWAGI! WAS THAT WHAT I THINK IT WAS?



03:25 Breaking All Generators Down at Tomato-Atsuma The

03:27 Breaking Power Plants in Sunagawa, Naie, Date, and S

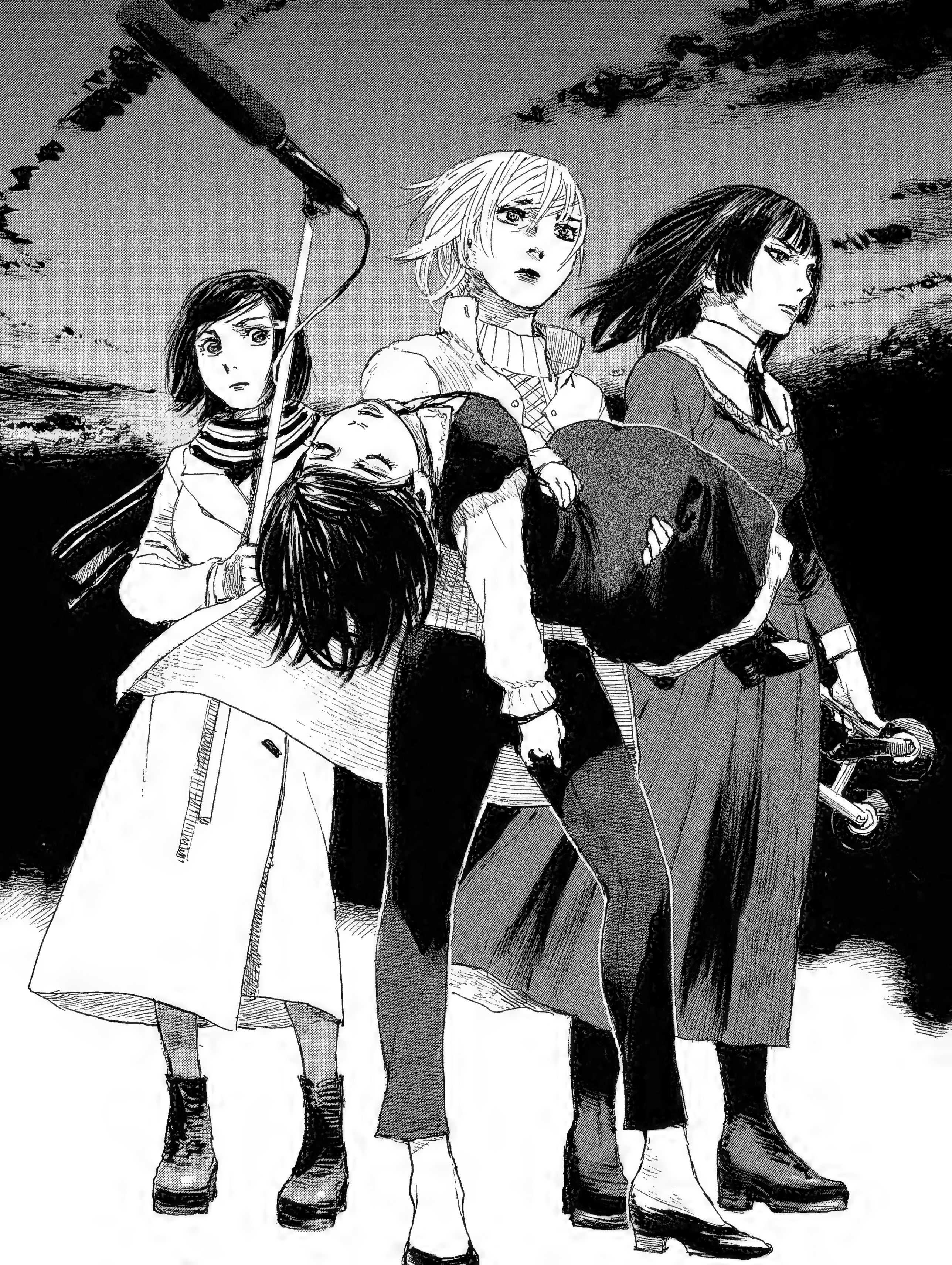
03:30 Breaking Hokkaido-Honshu HVCD Link Down

03:34 Breaking Hydroelectric Plants in Takami, Niikappu, and

03:34 Breaking Hydroelectric Plants in Takisato, Hoheikyo, a

03:35 Breaking Prefecture-Wide Blackout Including Sapporo

03:36 Weather JMA Releases Magnitude Update (03:36)



Chapter 56 「I CAN'T EVEN SEE YOUR FACE.」

HI THERE. IT'S NICE TO MEET EVERY-ONE.

MY NAME IS KAYANO HIROSE. I'VE BEEN A BROADCASTER FOR MOIWAYAMA RADIO FOR TWO YEARS NOW.

IF I MAY ASK, WHAT'S THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD "BROADCASTER"?

BUT WHEN IT COMES TO RADIO, PERSON-ALITIES USUALLY COVER EVERYTHING BY THEM-SELVES,

SO US BROAD-CASTERS TYPICALLY DON'T GET A WHOLE LOT OF AIR TIME.

WHAT'S MORE, RADIO-ONLY STATIONS LIKE MRS USUALLY ONLY HAVE A FEW ANNOUNCERS ON STAFF.

SOMETHING LIKE THAT, I BET. THAT MIGHT BE THE CASE FOR TV ANCHORS.

DO YOU THINK THEY'RE CHARISMATIC? ENTERTAINING? WISH THEY'D STAY THE HECK AWAY FROM BASEBALL PLAYERS?

IN WHICH CASE, THE ANNOUNCER WHO LIVES CLOSEST TO THE STATION (ME) IS CALLED IN.

EMERGENCY BROADCASTS CONDUCTED AFTER NINE ARE CARRIED OUT BY THE NIGHT CREW,

THAT JUST COMES WITH THE LIVE NATURE OF RADIO.

Sorry I'm not around to read that shit.

my bad.

THAT SAID, THERE ARE PLENTY OF INSTANCES IN WHICH THE RADIO PERSONALITY READS BREAKING NEWS ON THE SPOT INSTEAD OF AN ANNOUNCER.

INCLUDING US TWO, THERE ARE NINE ANCHORS AT MRS WHO WORK SHIFTS FROM 6 A.M. TO 9 P.M.

THIS IS MY COLLEAGUE AND MENTOR, KAORI OHORI-SAN. SHE'S ALSO THE STATION'S GENERAL PRODUCTION MANAGER.

THIS IS THE SOLO BOOTH USED FOR NEWS.

IT'S CRAMPED ENOUGH TO MAKE ANY CLAUSTROPHOBIC PASS OUT.

IT'S REALLY HELPFUL THAT THEY INCLUDE NOTES FOR PLACE NAMES AND SUCH.

NEWS IS USUALLY READ FROM A SCRIPT BASED ON THE GODO NEWS AGENCY'S REPORTS.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE CROSS-CHECK EVERYTHING WITH THE JMA AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICE'S INFO BEFORE WE BROADCAST ANYTHING.

FOR NATURAL DISASTERS, JUST ABOUT EVERYONE REFERS TO NHK FOR UPDATES.

AS A MODERATE CLAUSTRO-PHOBIC MYSELF, I SHUDDER TO THINK THAT I MIGHT BE TRAPPED IN THIS BOOTH ALL NIGHT.

A LARGE EARTHQUAKE STRUCK SOUTHERN HOKKAIDO TODAY AT 3:08 A.M.

THE EPICENTER WAS IN THE EASTERN IBURI REGION WITH A DEPTH OF 40 KILOMETERS*...

THE MAG-NITUDE IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE BEEN 6.7.

*APPROXIMATELY 25 MILES.

THIS EARTH-QUAKE POSES NO RISK OF A TSUNAMI. HOW-EVER, PLEASE BEWARE OF AF-TERSHOCKS.

LOCAL SEISMIC INTENSITY IS AS FOLLOWS. HIGH SIX: EASTERN IBURI. LOW SIX: SOUTHERN ISHIKABURI...

YOU'RE KIDDING!

'FRAID NOT.

HERE YOU GO.

PHEW.

ALL TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND SIGNALS ARE DOWN.

HOKKAIDO IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING A PREFECTURE-WIDE BLACK-OUT.

WE'VE JUST RECEIVED AN UPDATE ON THE EARTH-QUAKE.

FISSURES HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED IN MULTIPLE AREAS. PLEASE REFRAIN FROM DRIVING IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

I REPEAT, HOKKAIDO IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING A PREFECTURE-WIDE BLACKOUT. ALL TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND SIGNALS ARE DOWN.

FLICK
?!

LOOK, EVEN THE VENDING MACHINES ARE DOWN.
THE STREET-LIGHTS!

BUT THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT.
I DOUBT IT. IT'D HAVE TO BOOK IT LIKE A BEAR ON A MISSION TO GET HERE FROM MARUYAMA IN ONLY TEN MINUTES.
THINK A BEAR BROKE OUT OF THE MARUYAMA ZOO AND CHEWED THROUGH THE POWER LINES OR SOMETHING?

THE LAST TIME I EXPERIENCED TOTAL DARKNESS LIKE THIS WAS WHEN I BURIED MADOKA CHISHIRO'S BODY IN THE ICHANKOPPE MOUNTAINS.

I CAN'T EVEN SEE TWO METERS IN FRONT OF ME.

HOLY SHIT IT'S DARK.

SHE'S NOT DEAD, AND NO YOU DIDN'T...

UHH... DOES THIS SHADOW LOOK LIKE THAT ONOS' PLACE TO YOU?

BOM-BOM-BOM

OR MAYBE IT WAS THAT TIME I CRAWLED THROUGH THE WOODS IN WASSAMU...

HELLOOO! ERIKO-SAN?!

HEY, THE INTER-COM'S DEAD!

OH, ONO-SAN! GLAD YOU'RE O-

WHOA! WHAT KINDA STEPMOM WALKS AROUND THE HOUSE DRESSED LIKE THAT?! YOU'RE LIVING WITH A BACHELOR, LADY!

WOULD YOU MIND GIVING US A HAND? WE HAVE BIT OF A SITUATION UPSTAIRS.

OH, IT'S YOU TWO...

THIS REMINDS ME OF ONE OF KUREKO-SAN'S NOVELS...

I'M SORRY...

...

I CAN'T BELIEVE I LET YOU DIE TWICE.

I ONLY EVER THINK OF SAVING MYSELF.

FORGIVE ME, SAKI.

I'M SO PATHETIC.

BUT I WON'T MAKE YOU GO ALONE.

LET'S GO TO OUR OWN LITTLE WORLD WHERE WE CAN BE IN PEACE...

BAM

soul sanctuary?

BAM

BAM

GIRL, YOU REALLY NEED TO LEARN THAT SOMETIMES SHOVING YOUR UNWANTED, UNWARRANTED, STRAIGHT *UNFOUNDED* SYMPATHY ON PEOPLE TO TRY TO EASE YOUR OWN GUILTY CONSCIENCE MIIIGHT NOT BE THE BEST WAY TO MAKE THEM OPEN UP.

ERIKO-SAN, PLEASE CALM DOWN...

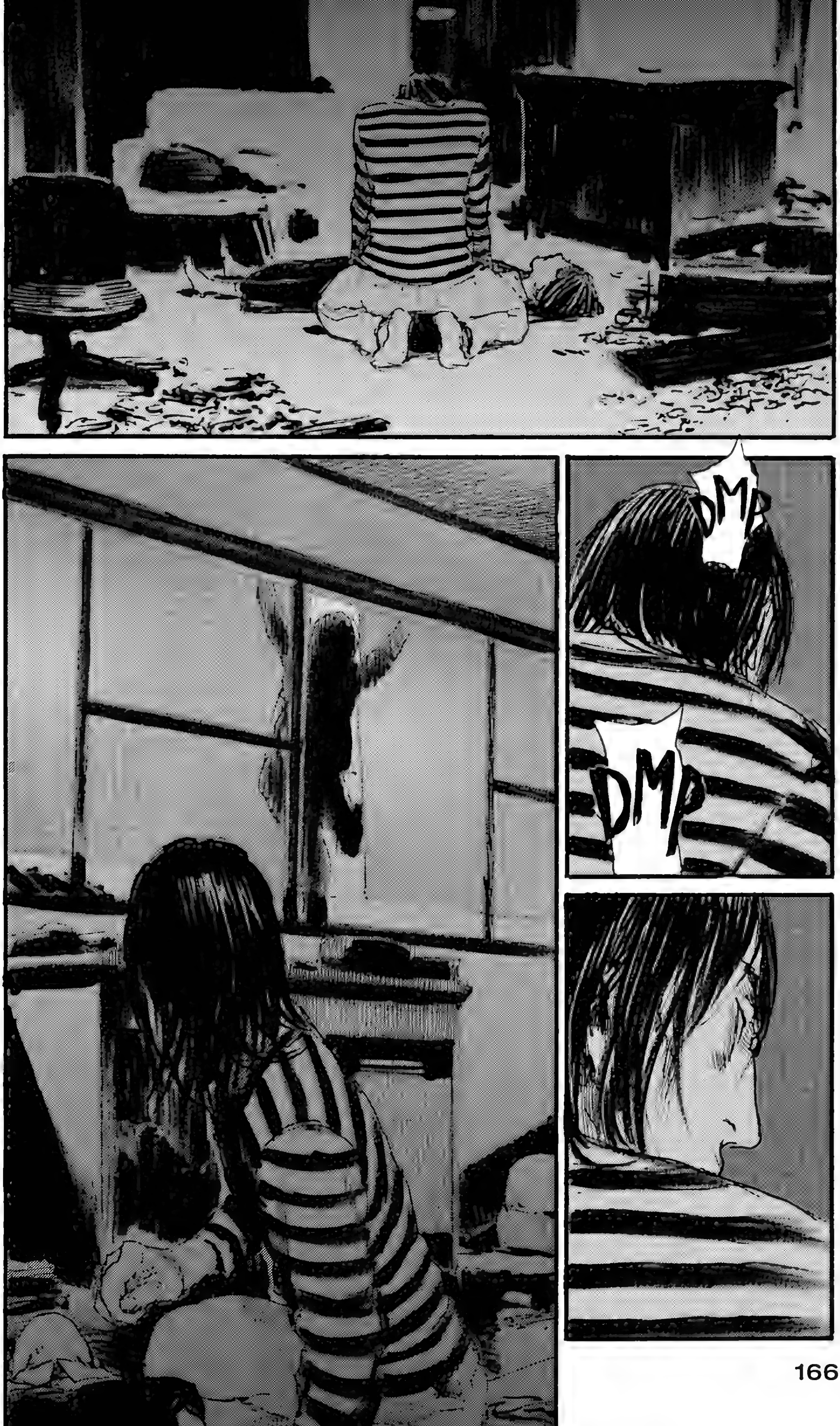
DON'T EVEN THINK OF SHUTTING YOURSELF UP IN YOUR SOUL SANCTUARY LIKE THAT! LET ME HELP YOU, JUNICHI! I'M HERE FOR YOU!

WHY WOULD YOU THINK WE WOULD?

GUESS WE'RE BUSTING IN THEN. GOT A SHOTGUN BY CHANCE?

IT'S LOCKED. MY BROTHER HAD US INSTALL A LATCH ON THE INSIDE...

WHY WON'T THE DOOR OPEN, ANYWAY?


DMP
DMP

I'LL OPEN THE-

JUST HANG ON A SEC!

HUH?! WHOA, WHOA!

WHOOM

TYPOOM

Eriko's

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON OUTSIDE?!

I JUST HEARD OVER THE RADIO TOO, BUT FORGET THAT!

THE WHOLE PREFECTURE'S OUTTA POWER!

YO, SHUT-IN!

PITY PARTY'S OVER, BUCKO!

OH, REALLY? WE'RE GOOD THEN.

OUR HOUSE USES A BATTERY-POWERED GAS HEATER...

SAYS THE CHICK WHO TRIED TO KICK MY WINDOW OUT.

DEPENDING ON WHAT KINDA HEATING YOU GUYS HAVE, WE COULD ALL FREEZE TO DEATH, Y'KNOW!

NO SHIT. IT'S THREE IN THE FUCKIN' MORNING.

I KNEW IT...

THIS WORLD IS SO DARK!

NO... THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.

IT'S SAKI. SHE'S DEAD...

NO WAY...

HUH ?!

HFF HFF

WHAP

DEAD PEOPLE DON'T BREATHE, DIPSHIT!

TEENAGE BOY...?

WHAT TEEN-AGE BOY WOULD GET CRUSHED TO DEATH BY A DINKY PLYWOOD SHELF? LIKE, SERIOUSLY.

WE PROBABLY SHOULDN'T MOVE HIM TOO MUCH.

I THINK HE MIGHT'VE HAD ONE OF THOSE "CONCUSSIONS" YOU SEE ON TV ALL THE TIME.

HOW'S HIROMI-KUN?!

MINARE-SAN!

MINARE-SAN, WILL YOU BE OKAY WATCHING HIROMI-KUN AND JUNICHI-SAN BY YOURSELF?

I'D LIKE TO RUN BACK TO THE STATION IF THAT'S ALL RIGHT.

SURE THING.

WANT ME TO JUST DRIVE YOU BACK REAL QUICK?

THAT'S OKAY.

WAIT, HOLD UP! YOU SURE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO WORK IF YOU WALK ALL THE WAY TO MT. MOIWA?

THERE'S ONLY ONE KINDA LABOR TO DO DURING A BLACK-OUT, AND THAT'S MANUAL!

NANBA-SAN.

THAT'S MY GIRL. WHAT A TROOPER.

I'LL JUST WALK BACK.

I'D RATHER STAY OFF THE ROADS IN CASE EMERGENCY WORKERS NEED TO USE THEM.

IT'S MY TRUSTY STEED, ONIKAGE!

TAKE THIS!

oni-kage ...?

OKAY. I'LL BE BACK AS SOON AS I CAN.

HI YO, SILVER...

GOD-SPEED, MIZUHO.

HISHRRRR

...SHE'S BARELY MOVING.

SHIT! NOW THE PHONES ARE DOWN...

Strong aftershocks are expected. Please remain calm and vigilant.

NONE YET. THE WATER, GAS, AND RAILWAY COMPANIES HAVEN'T POSTED ANY UPDATES.

WHAT'S THE WORD ON THE POWER?

Hokkaido is currently experiencing a prefecture-wide blackout.

WE'VE GOT ABOUT TEN LEFT BEFORE THE SYSTEM SWITCHES FROM THE UPS* TO THE GENERATORS.

IT'S BEEN TEN MINUTES SINCE THE POWER WENT OUT.

*UPS: UNINTERRUPTABLE POWER SUPPLY

MATO-SAN!

WHAT NOW?!

THE TRANSMITTER STATIONS IN KITAMI AND TOYA ONLY RUN ON UPS. THEY AREN'T EQUIPPED WITH GENERATORS!

THIS IS SERIOUS!

WHAT A RIOT.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN THE GENERATORS GET USED OUTSIDE OF DISASTER TRAINING, AND I'VE BEEN HERE FOR DAMN NEAR 20 YEARS.

MATO-SAN! ANYTHING I CAN HELP WITH?

TALK ABOUT IMPECCABLE TIMING.

KO-MOTO ...

IF THE UPS STOPS, SO WILL THE TRANS-MISSION!

TOYA HAS FEWER LISTENERS, SO WE'LL JUST PLAY BY THE NUMBERS...

KITAMI.

WHICH SHOULD WE PRIORITIZE?

SURE... WAIT, WHAT?!

I NEED YOU TO RUN A COUPLE GENERATORS AND FUEL OUT TO THE TRANSMITTER STATIONS IN KITAMI AND TOYA.

IF THEY EVEN DO...

I JUST GOT AN EMAIL FROM KIKUKAWA! HE SAYS HE'LL COME IN AS SOON AS THE TRAINS START MOVING AGAIN.

O-OKAY.

GOT IT!

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO THE KITAMI STATION, KOMOTO-KUN? LET ME GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS.

IT'S A FIGURE OF SPEECH, SMART-ASS.

BUT THERE'S ONLY TWO HOURS UNTIL SUNRISE.

YEESH. IT'S GONNA BE A LONG NIGHT.

AFTERWORD

Greetings, everyone. I hope you enjoyed *Wave, Listen to Me!* volume 7. Now, regarding the earthquake arc which began near the end of the book, this is naturally a recreation of the Hokkaido Eastern Iburi earthquake that took place on September 9th of 2018—an event I'm sure is still fresh in many people's memories. However, seeing as the date is November of 2015 story-wise, I can't exactly say that the quakes are one and the same. Truth be told, I originally had no intention of drawing anything resembling the Iburi earthquake. Partly because I hadn't planned to include disaster reporting in the slipshod story arc I'd slapped together in my head, but also because it just didn't seem appropriate to portray such a grievous event in my madcap mess of a manga. However, after a certain editor told me, "Well, knowing your track record, I'm sure you can find a way to work around it," I had an opportunity to speak with the people at AIR-G' (an FM station in Hokkaido), who told me many an interesting story about covering the quake. It was then that I realized that radio's most crucial function lies in disaster reporting. I knew it was something I had to get on paper. Something I couldn't afford to just "work around." And while I've tried my best to be mindful with my representation, please note that for those of you who experienced the earthquake first-hand, some scenes may bring up traumatic memories. In addition, as mentioned above, the events shown are merely based on reality, so there may be some discrepancies in details pertaining to the earthquake. Thank you for understanding. Of course, I will continue to bring you a historically accurate representation of the endeavors of Seicomart, hero of the north, at the time of telling. Till next time, take care.

Hiroaki Samura

Wave, Listen to Me! 7

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

Wave, Listen to Me! volume 7 copyright ©2019 Hiroaki Samura
English translation copyright ©2021 Hiroaki Samura

All rights reserved.

First published in Japan in 2019 by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.
Electronic Publishing rights for this English edition arranged through Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the copyright holders.

English digital edition published by Kodansha USA Publishing, LLC, New York.

www.kodanshacomics.com

ISBN: 9781636990477

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

Translation by Adam Hirsch
Lettering by Darren Smith
Editing by Alexandra Swanson
YKS Services LLC/SKY JAPAN, Inc.
Ripping by danke-Empire